TALL TALES
OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Michael Taft

Front cover: Sidehill Gouger, Elkhare or Jackalope? Despite the fact that the photograph is identified as an angry male Sidehill Gouger probably guarding its young nearby, photographed near Merritt, B.C. in 1982, the precise identification of the species is the subject of a lively debate. One "expert" has stated: "The beast . . . is a male Elkhare, rare even in the Valley of the Parsnip River, its habitat. While the female subsists mainly on parsnips, the male eats packrats and other small rodents which it impales on its antlers." More probably, however, it is a Jackalope (see tales No. 64, 65 and 66 for descriptions of Sidehill Gougers and Jackalopes). Jackalopes, or warrior rabbits, are frequently found in Wyoming, suggesting that the species may migrate to the Merritt area. (Photo: private collection, Victoria.)

Back cover: An example of a British Columbia tall tale in postcard form touting Okanagan apples. (Courtesy Lawson Packaging Pacific, Vancouver, and Monahan Agency, Vernon.)

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OF
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by

Michael Taft

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DEREK REIMER, Head, Sound and Moving Image Division

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The telling of tall tales is probably as old as man. For all of its antiquity, however, the art form seldomly continues its own life once transferred to the printed page. Since no transcription can ever be perfect, but merely an approximation, the end result will never be as interesting as the original. Furthermore, the telling of tall tales is partly a matter of drama and context. This is particularly true for the tall tales in this issue of the *Sound Heritage Series;* they have been "translated" three times, and each step has removed them farther from their original life. Almost all the tales were told to Michael Taft, who recorded them on tape or in note form. At a later date, he transcribed each tale as he prepared his manuscript draft of *Tall Tales of British Columbia*. In turn this draft was edited to conform to the editorial style of the *Sound Heritage Series*. Consequently there is a polish to the printed versions which some readers may deplore. The risk of this occurring is unavoidable; however, the original tapes and transcripts are available for study in the Sound and Moving Image Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia.

— The Editor

IN SEARCH OF THE TALL TALE

> ". . . I'm looking for the creative liar, of course,"
> "Oh—a-course," Jake said, "about Gate—
> I wouldn't like tuh say he lied exactly—jist
> sorta deckerates thuh truth a bit . . . . Tell me
> somethin'. You ever run intuh any trouble with folks?"
> "Not yet."
>
> —W.O. Mitchell,
> *Jake and the Kid*

The folklorist in Mitchell's story soon does run into trouble, but all ends well for him. Like that folklorist, I travelled through the countryside in search of tall tales and their tellers, but instead of trouble I encountered only good humour and hospitality. During the summer of 1982 I logged 10,000 kilometres through British Columbia from Vancouver Island in the west to Fernie in the east, from Penticton and Castlegar in the south to Williams Lake in the central interior. In addition, I met many people who had lived in the more remote northern regions or in the isolated coastal villages of the province.

My project began as a notion that British Columbia would be a natural home for tellers of tall tales. With its extremes of landscape and climate, long tradition of fishing, lumbering, mining, trapping and other outdoor or primary source occupations, and its reputation for harbouring eccentrics, a folklorist could hardly wish for more fertile territory. The incredible reality of the British Columbia landscape makes the province a land where one's ideas of natural landscape are most sorely tested.

Yet there was sparse evidence that my notion was correct. There had been no organized collecting of tall tales in the province, nor had such stories appeared in any abundance in local publications in British Columbia.

I could have travelled at random to communities around the province, asking for tales, but such an exercise would have been very time-consuming. Instead I decided to let the storytellers come to me. Through the Provincial Archives of British Columbia I placed letters in newspapers across the province. In addition, I went on radio a number of times to let the people of the province know I was searching for tall tales. The Archives received a constant stream of letters and telephone calls from those who either wanted to contribute their tales, or wanted to tell us of their storytelling neighbours and relatives. Twice I was a guest on phone-in radio programs, and there were so many callers that the telephones kept ringing after the programs went off the air.

From these responses I was able to plan my trip. Rarely was I disappointed in my search; rather, those I met sometimes supplied me with names of others who might "tell the odd tale." Those I met and interviewed ranged from master storytellers with reputations in their communities for telling good tales, to those who knew just a few tall tales, which they told when the occasion arose, to those who had never told such stories before but who remembered the tales of someone from generations past. Although most of those I interviewed were elderly, I also collected tales from youngsters; although most were men, a small number were women.

Although my search was successful, I have two regrets. First I regret that my presence affected the tales which I collected. Tall tales by their very nature need a special context in order to be told in their fullest possible form. Many tellers told me that they knew more tales than they could remember when faced by a microphone held by a stranger. If they were with a bunch of the boys, at the home of a neighbour drinking coffee around the kitchen table, on the job kidding with their fellow workers, in a bunkhouse forty years ago, or surrounded by others who could match their stories with even taller tales, then their memories might be jogged and their stories might be better. Although these are good stories, they would be even better if "captured on the hoof."

My second regret is that I could not visit all who sent in letters or telephoned. But there will always be more storytellers than any one folklorist can visit, even if there were a lifetime to complete the task.

I am indebted to all those who invited me into their homes to share their stories. I learned much from them. I owe special thanks to those who extended their hospitality further by giving refuge to an itinerant folklorist: Hazel and Reude Berry, Margery Fee and Günther Voss, Kay and Mark Mealing, Derek Reimer and Maxine Charlesworth, Anne and John Roberts, and Alan and Megan Roughley. I am grateful to all those in the media who publicized my activities, especially to radio stations CFAX in Victoria and CKNW in Vancouver. The encouragement, hospitality and help of the Sound and Moving Image Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia were indispensable; as well, I thank Struan Robertson and the staff of the Fort Steele Museum for their assistance. For sources, leads and good conversation, I thank Jack Hodgins, Janice Shaw, and Cornelius Marshall Smith.

THE TALL TALE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Not all the storytellers in this collection were born in British Columbia, nor do all the stories have this province as their setting. Yet, in their own way, these tales reveal an important aspect of the British Columbian psyche; historically, British Columbia has always been a land of immigration. It is a common joke that no one was actually born in the province—they simply came here. Whether they were workers looking for jobs, immigrants trying their luck in the New World, or retirees seeking the mild weather and relaxed atmosphere of Victoria or the Okanagan, these people have all contributed their traditions to the still-developing culture of British Columbia. Considering this, it should come as no surprise that the settings of some of these tales are the Prairies, the Maritimes, or the United States.

The tall tale is a truly international form with its roots in early European storytelling traditions. Wherever a particular tall tale was created, it quickly spread to other areas, and other countries, evolving to such an extent its birth and original form have become entirely obscured. Such is the nature of much of folklore. The result of this widespread distribution of tall tales is a ready international storehouse of tales—stories any teller may explore and use. Yet different peoples use this storehouse in different ways; consequently the international tall tales found in Saskatchewan, Alabama, or New Zealand will differ in quantity, frequency and quality from those found in British Columbia. In short, British Columbians reflect the unique qualities of their province in the way they use this international storehouse. Thus the number of side-hill gouger tales found in this province are closely related to the mountainous landscape, the heavy fog stories to the long coast, and the mosquito stories grow out of man's experiences in the riverine and muskeg areas of the province. By contrast, a flat, inland area such as Saskatchewan will have many more stories about flatland jackalopes, dust storms and grasshoppers.

That most of these stories do have a British Columbia setting shows the influence of this province upon the international tradition. Whenever a story enters the folklore of a specific region or culture, that culture immediately begins to reshape the story to fit local taste and custom. Sometimes this reshaping is quite unconscious, but just as often the storyteller tailors, regionally and topically, for his listeners.

Keith McColl discusses this reshaping process when recalling how he learned "The Tree Bridge I":

Keith McColl: I heard that story down in Arizona last year. And I'm sure that the broadcast was picked up from somewhere further down into the United States, over in the Florida country or someplace in there. These two old guys were talking; they were exchanging tall tales on the radio, and I just happened to pick it up. And I think they were referring to the Mississippi River; so I thought, "Well gee, I can adapt that to the Fraser River and make a story up that way."

* * *

The tall tale is a strange sort of story—part truth and part fiction. As many of the tellers put it, the tall tale begins as a factual account or description of something entirely believable. As the story progresses, the truth begins to stretch; the more it stretches, the less believable the tale becomes, but if the teller is good enough at his craft, the listener crosses the line of credibility without noticing it and is "taken in," if only for a moment, by the storyteller. The tall tale, then, is like a catch tale.

Geoffrey Ellis: I do a lot of fishing. As a matter of fact, I was fishing yesterday out in the Saanich Inlet. No luck. I ended up by going to Safeway this morning and buying one. But I was fishing in Saanich Inlet some years back when you could really get lots of fish in there. I hooked into a beauty, a real beauty of a spring salmon. Biggest one I'd ever, ever caught, or ever latched into, or ever seen for that matter. Weighed sixty-two and a quarter pounds. I'll never forget that. Anyway, I played that fish for half an hour—back to the boat and off it would go again, and back to the boat and off it would go again, right alongside the boat. I never had a chance to get a gaff in. When I finally thought I had it—just ready to gaff it—the leader broke and that beautiful sixty-two and quarter pound salmon took off. Sixty-two and a quarter pounds. I could have *cried* when that fish got away. Now you might ask how I knew that it was sixty-two and a quarter pounds. Well, Doctor, the whole thing is, of course, the scales are on the fish.

The tall tale is also similar to a practical joke: the teller is the prankster and the listener the victim. Its humour resides not only in the way the truth is stretched, but in the way the listener is made to appear gullible: the widening eyes, the dropping jaw, and the inevitable, "Is that true?" all revealing that the old trick has worked again.

As the reader will see in the stories collected here, the style of telling such stories corresponds to their truth-stretching quality. Most tellers set their tales in an actual place and time, while telling the tale in the first person to make their account seem like an eye-witness report. A good teller will fill his story with factual details, bits of history, geography, the names of historical figures—anything to make the story seem a matter-of-fact account.

Jack Koyl: A couple of years ago, they went off backpacking into the mountains. And I don't know if you know the road, but by St. Mary Lake in Glacier National Park there's a sign on the side of the road that says, "Water from this lake goes into three oceans. In one direction it goes north to the Arctic Ocean; it goes west to the Pacific; and it goes south to the Gulf of Mexico"—which would put it in the Atlantic Ocean. And my son-in-law, the lawyer, convinced our son there was a hole in the middle of that lake, because the pull of the three directions had pulled the water up. It took the son about half an hour to realize he'd been taken: that water seeks its own level.

Some storytellers relate their tales in a joking or tongue-in-cheek fashion.

Gilbert Haines [on his uncle]: He didn't do things by halves. Everybody in our day had a Model-T Ford. "Oh," he said—he lived at that time, he lived in South Dakota under

> one of the biggest ranchers in South Dakota—had a sheep ranch—and he told about the Model-T. So he says, "I'll take you to a fence corner, and I can show you ten bushels of sparkplugs that I've changed in Model-T Fords." He says, "If you didn't do anything else to a Model-T, you changed the plugs before you started."

Other storytellers insist, often emphatically, their tale is true. The more the listener protests the story could not have actually happened, the more the teller insists on its veracity. Often he will challenge the listener with "I was there and you weren't" or "I heard this story from my uncle who was known as Honest John." Such is the nature of this verbal practical joke.

GILBERT HAINES [on his uncle]: He told it as if it was the gospel truth.

TAFT: Never cracked a smile?

GILBERT HAINES: Never cracked a smile, but us kids sitting there were just goggle-eyed: "That couldn't be true!" But the rest were laughing.

Almost all tall tales concern the world of nature. Plants, animals, the physical features of the landscape, the weather, the relationship between these natural forms and the activities and inventions of mankind; the laws of gravity, energy, and motion; the physical and mental abilities of men and women—all are subject to the truth-stretching art of the storyteller. The awe of nature revealed in tall tales sometimes verges on the mythic.

> I invented this tall tale in 1975, and it goes like this:
>
> This is a story of the Raven, long before the arrival of the white man. Raven, always mischievious and adventurous, decided one day to go on a great journey. To this day no one knows where the Raven ventured but it is said that his travels were not of this world. When Raven returned from his long journey, he discovered that he had been followed by a great bird the likes of which the Indians had never seen before. Raven was not happy with this situation and determined to drive the new bird away. This was in the fall of the year and the Raven became so busy with winter that he almost forgot about his resolution. But the spring came to warm the land and Raven renewed his quest to drive the errant bird out of the Raven's home. As it happened, the bird was a female, and thus began to build a nest in anticipation of the forthcoming egg. Raven swooped down from the sky and scattered the nest in all directions. Again and again, each time the strange bird built a nest, Raven found it and completely destroyed it. Spring was coming to a close and then it was too late. Raven had ruined every nest she had built and she could not keep from giving birth to the egg any longer. Down the great valleys she flew towards the sea. Higher and higher she flew, now out over the delta, now about the curling whitecaps. Raven, with his sharp eyes, watched from his perch on a tall fir and as he watched, he saw the bird release a single white shelled egg way up in the air. He scarcely could believe his eyes as the chick began immediately to peck its way out of the shell. Bit by bit, the shell split, cracked and broke apart as it sped towards a water doom. Then just when it looked like all was lost, the shell fell away and the chick was free. Natural aerodynamics took over and the little chick glided back to the beach skimming over the wave tops, where it was met by the mother bird. Raven squawked loudly, flew back into the forest and never bothered these birds again.

But usually the teller of tall tales will take these natural laws and carefully tamper with them, usually distorting and breaking them in the process of turning the fact into fiction.

Taft: Were there any mosquitoes up there [at Fort Chimo]?

Reude Berry: Especially at Chrystal One! That's up from Fort Chimo. We had a little airstrip up there. This never happened to me, but the guys at the hangar told me from time to time we had planes come in and land, and they would fuel them up. A guy said one day a mosquito come in and landed down by the fuel truck. They had fifty gallons of high-test gas in it, before they found out it wasn't a plane.

Indeed the tall tale has some of the qualities of the animated cartoon, fanciful characters run beyond the edge of cliffs and then retrace their steps, become flattened by bulldozers and then pop back into shape, or run so fast that they are in two places at once.

But before one can successfully break the laws of nature, one must be acutely aware of what these laws are. For this reason, most tall taletellers have considerable knowledge of nature: the forests, the sea, the mountains, as well as the plants and animals native to these areas. Most of those I interviewed worked at one time or another as loggers, miners, farmers, construction workers, cowboys, fishermen, prospectors, trappers or railroad workers, or their family was involved in one of these occupations, or they hunted and fished as a pastime. In other words, most understood the countryside and its peculiarities from firsthand experience. Thus it is not surprising the best tall taletellers seem to come out of British Columbia's outdoor labour force and that each type of work calls for its own brand of truth-stretching:

Duncan MacMillan: They're all a bunch of liars. No, I guess the difference [is] each has their own way of telling a story. They all tell stories, but they all have to do with their own line of work, generally speaking. The fisherman tells you the old proverbial of how big the fish was. The miner always tells how big and how heavy the gold nugget was. The logger, he's always the biggest and best of everything. I mean they always stretch it a little bit.

Robert Swanson: It was in fun, you see. They make the [bs] up. They'd say, "Well, geeze, I was in a camp on the so-and-so, and every time this damn rigger climbed a tree (he had to cut the top off) the bastard would stand on his head on top of—" "Aw, [bs]! Aw"— "Aaaaah"—they'd throw a bloody hat at him or something: "You [bs-ing] bastard," you see. And then of course it wouldn't be too long until some daring young fellow would get to be a rigger, and he'd actually get on the top and stand on his bloody head on top of the tree.

The relationship between tall tales and outdoor occupations is especially seen in the fact most tall storytellers are men. Until recently, mining, logging, fishing and other such occupations were the private preserve of men; their jokes and tall tales were neither shared with nor meant for women. Of course, women do know and tell tales, as this collection demonstrates, but these taletellers were usually involved either directly or indirectly in the occupations of their fathers, brothers, or husbands. For example, Katherine Wood spent many years in isolated northern communities where her husband was an agent for the Hudson's Bay Company. Thus she came in contact with trappers, hunters, and other outdoorsmen, and learned their stories—even if these men's stories were not meant for her ears.

Katherine Wood: I don't remember them telling me stories. You see, I was kind of a mouse in the corner. It was all men. I just kind of sat there and listened to the act that went on. When they came down to the post, I once threatened not to serve anymore meals unless they did some of their sitting and talking in the house too. Because they did all their talking in the store, and I'd be sitting in the house alone. I wasn't lonely—but you like to hear these tales. Because my husband didn't remember them to tell me.

As well, it seems that the older generations are better truth-stretchers than the young. Invariably I was told that the long-gone old-timers were the real tale-spinners. In reality, it may be that the wisdom of years makes one more adept at walking the fine line between truth and fiction; that the subtle form of humour in tall tales appeals to the more mature mind. Thus, it only *seems* that the best tellers are now long dead; the old people of today are every bit as good as their grandfathers at the craft.

However, another point might also be a factor: a few decades ago there was no television or radio to distract and entertain people. As many storytellers told me: people had to make their own entertainment in by-gone days and this made them better story-tellers than the present generation. They created their own tales while we receive ours pre-packaged and ready-formed. There is some truth in this last observation, but I also suspect that, like young Christopher and Drew Brayshaw in this collection, verbal pranksters will always be with us.

Christopher Brayshaw: I forget the name for this animal. It was in the Rocky Mountains, and it's a special type of mountain goat. Because as you know, the Rocky Mountains are sheer. You may have travelled through them coming here. Climbers have to use special equipment to go up and down the sheer precipices and cliffs and all this. But just for little ledges, like you know sometimes there'll be a ledge here and a ledge there.

Taft: One below the other.

Christopher Brayshaw: Right, that an ordinary animal couldn't fit on. So what this goat has, it has longer legs on one side and shorter legs on the other side. And the funny thing is, it is a goat, but it lays square eggs, so the eggs don't roll away down the slopes.

Another quality of the tall tale is worth noting: it is primarily a form of entertainment. Because of this, a number of the storytellers objected to the term "lie" as a description of their art, and more than one made the distinction between lying and [bs-ing]—a term used by many tellers and accepted by many more who might be squirmish about using the term themselves.

Cougar McLay: As long as people laugh, there's no difference [between jokes and tall tales]. There is a difference between [bs] and lying though. I'll go to a thief. You can always watch a thief, but you can't watch a liar. And I don't know whether that's going to answer your question or not, either. That's the difference between [bs-ing] and lying. A good liar, you can't tell the difference. You'll find out, and that's when it hurts. When a person has lied to you and you find out later that they had been lying to you—to me anyway—I think this is one of the worst things you could ever do is to lie to a person.

McLay speaks for many other storytellers. The tall tale has no malicious intent, nor is it told to deceive another for the teller's personal gain. Although the teller tests the gullibility of the listener, he has no intention of taking advantage of this gullibility. In fact, several tellers mentioned that if a listener took offence at being tricked, he had no one to blame but himself. Taking offence at a harmless and good-natured trick only makes the listener appear more comical and pathetic in the eyes of the storyteller.

The classic situation in which tall tales are told involves an old-timer and a greenhorn. The old-timer shows his knowledge and superiority over the greenhorn, since he has a command of truth and fiction which the new worker on a job, the inexperienced hunter, the stranger, or the young person lacks.

KATHERINE WOOD: When you first go north, all the old China hands tell you stories which you believe. And after six months, you find out that they're all lies. So then you won't believe anything. So then they tell the truth.

Ernie Streifel explained how he told his tale, "Mom Could Chop Wood," in this very situation:

ERNIE STREIFEL: I remember one time my son was in the soccer-exchange. Two boys came up from Seattle, and, I guess, when my son had gone down there, he had told them we lived in the country and all this stuff. We were going to have a wiener roast that night, and I told one of the boys to chop a little kindling. So he started hacking away. He was doing a miserable job and I was afraid he was going to hurt himself. So I said, "Give me that ax." And I took the ax and chopped this kindling. And he says, "Boy, can you ever chop wood." And I said, "No, I can't chop wood. My mom can chop wood." And I told him this story. It was really funny, because his eyes kept getting bigger and bigger. His mouth dropped down. It was really funny to watch him.

Yet the greenhorn gains some benefit from being the butt of the humour. The more he is tricked, the more aware he becomes of that fine line between truth and fiction; soon, he no longer trips over that line, but may become an accomplished and experienced member of the tall taletelling group. For the young boys on the soccer-exchange, their woodchopping lesson might not have been very important, but for a young greenhorn, who is learning to distinguish fact from fiction on the job site, such stories are part of his education. For the budding storyteller as well, being the dupe is the first step in learning the art of truth-stretching. Ernie Haggstrom, now an accomplished tall taleteller, recalls both his youthfull naivete and his teacher, Jimmy Lyons, a master truth-stretcher.

ERNIE HAGGSTROM: Oh I used to sit and visit with Jimmy Lyons. Every time, you could tell. I, at that time, was 18, 19. But they wisened me up to it. I used to shut my mouth right away, because as soon as they [Jimmy Lyons and his cronies] sat down with me, I wouldn't tell anything about no-matter-what I learned or heard. Because with me, at my age, boy they'd outdo me every time.

Although tricking the greenhorn might be the classic tall tale situation, it is by no means the only situation, nor even the most common situation, in which tall tales are told. As a form of entertainment, these stories are similiar to jokes and anecdotes: tales which amuse and which help time to pass quickly. Thus, the listener is not always fooled or duped, as is the greenhorn, but simply enjoys listening to a good stretch of the truth.

BILL LAW: And here comes old George Stafford. Drifting. He's got a little three horse-power inboard engine in there, a little two-cycle affair. He was drifting by, and kicking it. "I'll give you one more chance, by-god. If you don't go, I'll dump you overboard, by-god. Yes I will. Just one more chance because it doesn't get so rough around here [that] I need you for ballast, by-god. I ain't going to step over you every time I want to push on these oars." You could hear him out there from the beach. "By-god, I'm not going to be stepping over you." So he worked at it a little while. "You refuse, eh, by-god. Over you go!" And he disconnected that thing and dumped it right there in Seymour Narrows. Then he rowed into the bay where George and I were. "Just now dumped that engine, by-god. It wouldn't work, and if it don't work, by-god, it ain't going to ride."

For the master storyteller, such as Lou Newell, normal conversation allows him to practice his art in a spontaneous and unrehearsed fashion. The good teller misses no opportunity to display his quick wit, and Mr. Newell recalls finding an opening for "The Ice Patch":

Lou Newell: That was made up on the spur of the situation that developed at the time, you see. It was snowing and it was heavy. What really brought it on was because we stopped for dinner and the other car went on by, kept on going into Kamloops. We got into Kamloops five minutes after them, yet we stopped and had our lunch. They said, "What happened?" So right away, I'm right on this thing. I had to have something to tell them.

Sometimes the listener purposely tests the spontaneous wit of the taleteller, as in the following case which almost seems a ritual between Ernie Streifel and his neighbour:

Ernie Streifel: It used to be really great. We had a neighbour over here and he was a terrific fellow. He looked just like Colonel Sanders, and he was about seventy-five years old. He was so nosy. You know if he ever heard a noise or anything, he'd be over here. Lots of times I used to think up some, some silly thing, and make a noise, and he'd come over. He'd hint around at what was happening, and then I would finally come out with this really ridiculous ending to a story like this, and he'd puff away on his pipe and he'd look at me. Then he'd just walk away and say, "See you." And he wouldn't say another word until a few days later when he got curious about something else again.

The setting for telling tall tales is any informal gathering place. Wherever friends and neighbors congregate to pass the time of day, that is where such stories are told:

Taft: Was the bar [in Windermere] the place for stories?

Harry Richardson: Oh yeah, the bar or the post office. Post office, lots of times. They'd get in there at night-time waiting for the mail. Well, the mail might be a couple of hours late coming in. Came in by stage or it came in, years later, by train. But the post office was a gathering place. There were three places that were the gathering places: there was the barrooms, then there was the post office, and then the steamboat wharf, or the railroad station in later years. And they'd always congregate around there and that's, that's where you'd hear a lot of these stories.

Donald Seymour: You see, on [Saltspring] Island the boat came maybe two or three times a week. We had a family who had a grocery store there called the Mouats—the Mouat brothers. In this store there was a potbellied stove, believe it or not, and there was a lot of sitting around and telling stories there. Of course us young kids weren't [involved].

At home among family members, good storytellers can also practice their art. The supper table is usually the place for such activity, as Alfred Ferguson remembers when recalling his uncle, Frank Verdier, who was a fine storyteller:

Alfred Ferguson: Well generally we were there [at Frank's] nearly always in the summertime. He had a big basement he'd use as a summer kitchen. He had a stove and a sink and all that downstairs. We'd all sit around the old table after supper, after the dishes were cleared off, and he'd start telling these here stories about what he did in the old days. I wish I could remember half the things . . . Well, of course, he always sat at the end of the table in a great big captain's chair. And he'd sit there over his tea with his elbows on the table, and he'd just start to talk about things. He'd joke a little bit. He was always pulling jokes on people.

House visits, as well, are a time for tall tales and other entertainment, as Keith Henderson recalls from his childhood:

Keith Henderson: You know back there in the mountains you'd get woodcutters coming in they'd jaw around and tell stories. I wish I remembered a lot of them, but of course I've forgotten them now. A lot of these people were [storytellers], because we used to get a lot of characters up there. Real nice guys too. We had the proverbial coal oil lamps and things like that back in the mountains. No electricity, of course. Our radio was always battery-powered, so the radio was only used for news. It was never used for anything else. Before the winter was out, that thing [the radio] went. So all you had was the local characters that dropped in for a cup of coffee, lunch or tea. This was the form of entertainment, you know. They would tell stories and laugh and joke. And everybody, of course, would try to outdo the other with a taller tale.

Planned parties and regular get togethers create an atmosphere in which tall tales are definitely called for. Like impromptu house-visits, these occasions demand resourceful entertainment on the part of host and guest alike.

Lou Newell: I'll even have fun at a party. I don't really have to have a tall story. All I have to do is say, "That reminds me of a time when I was —" and everybody goes quiet: "What is it?"

Ruby Erwin: Oh it's always when he [her father] had some of his old buddies in or some of his cronies or somebody, and they were sitting around having a cup of tea, or playing cards or something. Yeah, he used to play a lot of euchre and pinochle. Whenever he had some of these cronies in, somebody like himself, they'd be telling these yarns.

There are, however, still more formal settings for the telling of tall tales. Whereas stories of all sorts — jokes, personal experience stories, legends, and rumours — might fit the occasion of a party or visit, there are some situations in which the tall tale is specifically called for. Ernie Haggstrom describes the [bs] table at the White Rock Legion:

Ernie Haggstrom: That's a big round table like this [his dining room table], bigger than this. Most legions have what they call a [bs] table, [and] at that table, you buy your own beer. You don't have to buy a round or anything, you know. They call it the [bs] table and you sit by yourself. You're allowed to talk to everybody. Anybody who sits there, if they tell you to shut up, well that's a no-no. You can talk to anybody and everybody. That's the rule. You can sit down with five people, but if the other three or four people sit there and they join in your story, that's what the table is put out for.

At the [bs] table the taletellers sit in judgment of one another and storytelling becomes a competition. Whoever is most artful at stretching the truth rules the table, at least until another, better tale is told. But judgment becomes paramount in the most formal of tall taletelling occasions: the liar's contest. At least two of the tellers in this collection, Reude Berry and Ray Logie, have entered and won liar's contests. In this setting, one storyteller after another takes the floor and tells his best tale; a panel of judges or the audience as a whole decide who has stretched the truth in the most artful fashion.

But whether the setting is informal or formal, there is often a competitive quality to tall taletelling, especially if two or more tellers are present at the same time. Tale-swapping is a contest which comes quite naturally to storytellers and, as Ernie Haggstrom explains, it doesn't take much to begin a swapping session:

Ernie Haggstrom: This was 1939, 1940, and they [Frazer and Lyons] never sat at the same table. They used to, but one would always outdo the other one. They could tell stories all day, all night. But they never harmed or judged or anything. But as soon as they [heard] somebody starting to complain or trying to tell a tall story, they told one twice as good. And always, every time started with, "You should have worked where I come from" or "Where *I* worked —." Always.

Taft: That was the cue?

Ernie Haggstrom: Oh yeah, boy, everybody'd shut up and listen. And nobody ever interrupted.

The competitive storyteller is always ready to confront his challengers. His goal is to outswap or out-tell his opponents without the need of rehearsal or planning, and his prize is the admiration of his fellow workers or community members. A quick and ready wit is an admirable trait.

Gilbert Haines: Around work with salesmen there's people telling stories — one kind and another — and you hit customers who think you've — out here especially — never seen the Prairies. So they start telling you strange things about the Prairies. So you have to retaliate. Because after all, I was born there. Knew more about the Prairies than they did.

Tale-swapping adds another dimension to the humour of these stories. If the way the truth is stretched is funny, and the reactions of the listeners are also funny, then the competitive game between two or more storytellers is amusing as well. The eyes of the bystanders switch from one teller to the next as they swap tales, as though a tennis match were in progress.

Ray Logie: Particularly my two Scottish uncles. I mean I'm sure they did this. You see, they would get into a kind of fantasy — they might have even made them up. You see, and they would — and we'd be sitting around a campfire or I'd be doing something. But I'm pretty sure now that they were just doing a number with each other. I know, because my aunt used to laugh a lot. You see, my Aunt Marjorie would be listening in, and she would be laughing a lot. And I would, of course, be with rabbit ears listening. [See "Bowser" for an example.]

The humour of tall tales, goes beyond the story and beyond the story's context. Quite often the teller of tall tales becomes a humorous character himself; that is, the humour of the tales seems to rub off on the teller, and in the eyes of his listeners, he becomes a rather eccentric, flamboyant and humorous character even when he is not telling tales. This phenomenon is not easily explained. Although some storytellers I met were eccentric, most did not stand out in this fashion; indeed, there was no correlation between talent in storytelling and eccentricity. However, over time, especially over the years after a tall taleteller has died, his character becomes larger than life among those who remember him. Any eccentricity, any humorous incident in the teller's life is remembered and retold, so that the teller, who may have been rather "normal" most of the time, becomes a caricature of himself in later years. In addition, a teller who is aware of his role as the court jester might begin to conform to the stereotype that people form of his character, which only reinforces his own stereotypic eccentricity in the minds of those who know him.

The above explanation might suffice for many examples, but no doubt some past taletellers were indeed out of the ordinary in their everyday actions and words. There can be little doubt, for example, that a turn-of-the-century storyteller from the East Kootenays was a true eccentric:

HARRY RICHARDSON: There was a fellow in Wilmer, again a very colourful character by the name of Bugram. He was a very short guy; oh, I don't think he was over about five-foot two, but he would be about as broad as he was long. The last time I saw him, I was working in Cranbrook about 1925 or '26, and I met him on the streets of Cranbrook on a very hot day. He had on three hats, and sunglasses on, and I don't know how many coats. He was the funniest-looking character. There [were] a couple of women in there that had been raised in Wilmer that knew him all through their childhood and they used to invite him in.

An interesting point that he'd [told] so many stories about his lifetime that nobody believed him. Anything he'd say, well nobody believed him.

A number of storytellers, now long dead, were described to me as being massive men who almost seemed tall tale characters themselves. Again, how much is truth and how much is mere reputation is impossible to say, but physical strength seems to accompany a strong wit in descriptions of some of the old storytellers. For example, the Pankoskis's stories of Frank Schlitz describe him as a prodigious eater and drinker, who could outdo anyone, not only in telling tales, but in ingesting great amounts and strange objects.

MARY PANKOSKI: Another time, he was in the beer parlour and somebody bet him [he couldn't drink a gallon of beer]. He thought he could. He left the beer parlour and he came back after a while, and he was ready to take the bet on. So he drank the bottle — the gallon of beer — and won the bet. "How did you know you could do it?" "Well," he said, "I just went home and drank another one." He used to trap muskrats. He'd get one and he'd skin it on the way to the next [trap] and eat the flesh as he walked between traps. This is the story he told us. I'd almost believe it too, knowing him.

But the character-trait of these long-gone storytellers that is most believable is that their quick wit went beyond storytelling. Many are the stories of these tellers producing a quick and timely retort or wisecrack; their verbal dexterity surpassed their physical prowess. The famous By-God Stafford (see "Whale's Milk I," and "II," "Whales Mating" and "By-God Stafford Tells a Lie") was perhaps better known for his general quick wit than for his stories, as Bill Law illustrates with a story about By-God in the First World War:

BILL LAW: But they had to send him home. He wouldn't soldier. I remember one time I said, "How's she going?" "Going pretty good right now, by-god. I was just up to the king and queen, by-god. I saw the little prince, too." He said, "Well the old king, he's not bad. He's a pretty good guy. He asked me if I was still hand-logging in British Columbia, and I said no. He asked me if I brought my jacks with me, and I said no, I didn't bring any tools, I told him. I says, I'm not hand-logging; I came over here to win this war for you, king. Not to hand-log. You got no timber anyway in this bloody country."

Language, point of view and their unique sense of place make these tales a part of British Columbia's folklore. These tales are also the art of individual storytellers; for even if two tellers recount the same tale, their personal ways of reshaping the story will make the two versions quite different from one another. For this reason, I have included more than one version of some tales, since each version shows the individual artistry of its teller.

* * *

I have attempted to classify these tales in a rough sort of way. Yet the reader will readily see that some tales might as easily belong in one section as in another: "The Trail Grows Cold" could be placed among the cold weather stories; the "Whale's Milk" tales or "Grace" would fit just as well under Remarkable Animals as under The Tables Turned. The titles are my own inventions with the exception of the titles of Robert Swanson's poems, and "By-God Stafford Tells a Lie," which is Mrs. Kelly's. I have attempted to transcribe these tales as accurately as possible, but transcribing is always a tricky business. Some of these tall tales grew out of general conversation, which meant that I had to decide when the conversation left off and the tale began. In these cases, I tried to err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion. But the reader should remember that these tales were meant to be listened to, not read. I could not transcribe the intonations of voice, the facial expressions, the body movements, and the general drama of telling these tales which are as much a part of the stories as are the words. These, the reader must supply for himself.

STRANGE LANDSCAPES

The natural features of a region are among the most common subjects of truth-stretching. For British Columbia the reality of the rugged mountains, the great forests, and the abundant plant life would seem to make exaggeration unnecessary; as longtime prospector, Cornelius Marshall Smith, told me, things in this province are so strange the plain truth is a tall tale. Yet there is always room to make even the most incredible landscapes more incredible.

The bulk of the stories concern, not the landscape itself, but the climate of the region. Depending upon where one travels in this province, the climate changes; and the stories change to fit the local weather conditions. Lou Newell compares the heat of an Okanagan summer to that of the American south, while others speak of the frigid winters of the northern interior. Bruce Watt recalls the mud and dust storms of the Cariboo, while others describe the chinooks of the Kootenays and the heavy coastal fog.

It is interesting that most tales that describe the landscape do so in a positive way—the large trees and huge vegetables, and the remarkable natural phenomena—whereas the tales about the climate take the negative side: the thick fog, the strong winds, or weather that is unbearably cold. These views of the province reflect two facts about British Columbia life: the landscape cannot be ignored, and good weather is so common as to be unremarkable, whereas the few bad days a year are worth the truth-stretcher's concern.

The Many Wonders of the Land

1. THE DENSE FOREST I

Ernie Haggstrom: I got a job in a logging camp here in B.C. The first day that I worked there, we'd finished working and [were] sitting around after supper in the bunkhouse, and the big loggers looked at me and they said, "Well, Ernie, either you got to get up and sing a song, tell a story or dance a jig."

I sat there for a minute or two and I say, "Well what the hell. I don't know no stories. I'm only nineteen years old. Never can hold a tune. Can't sing. Never danced in my life. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll kick the . . . out of the first one of you that steps up on the floor with me." And they all sit and look at each other. Nobody gets up, and I go and sit down. All of a sudden they start talking about working in logging camps here and there. And I said, "Well you should come from the camp where I came from. Where I worked the trees were just like wheat fields. The trees were so thick that a man had to walk sideways to get through the trees."

Then the subject changed to hunting. And fifteen minutes later we started talking about shooting deer and moose. "You should come where I come from. Hell, there the moose had 12-, 14-foot spread of horns."

This [one] big logger says, "Hey, Ernie, we didn't mind you having forests—trees like wheat fields where a man had to walk sideways, but now you got moose going there with 12, 14 spread of horn. How in the hell did those moose get through those trees?" "That's easy, they pulled their horns in just like you guys did."

2. THE DENSE FOREST II

Reude Berry: During a lunch period [at the job] he was telling us about a so-called friend of his from Vancouver Island. A little fellow, he was about four-foot nine. He was back through Nova Scotia, and he was a logger, so he went in to apply for a job at this camp. The push says, "Well I tell you," he says, "actually we're not really looking for just anybody. We're looking for loggers." And he says, "I'll tell you," he said, "if you can out-lie me, out-eat me and out-fight me, you're hired."

This little fellow said, "Look, number one I don't lie, so you got me beat there. And it's obvious with my little size there's no way I could out-eat you. But I got to tell you something that happened back in B.C."

"Up in northern B.C. we got trees up there that are so tall, it takes two men to see the top of them. One man looks as far as he can, and the other one looks up from there on. And they are so big that it took me about three minutes to walk around one. And they are so close together that you can't see through them. It was up in there one trip that we were up in there looking over the trees and stuff and getting ready to fall, and God, I saw a bull moose with a 12-foot spread. He was coming in a straight line right down through those trees."

"Hold it! Hold it!" the push said, "you don't lie?" "Yeah, I don't lie." "And yet the trees were so big, it took you two and a half minutes to walk around them?" "Yeah." "And they were so close together, you couldn't see through them very far?" "Yeah." "And you saw a bull moose with a 12-foot spread coming down through those trees?" "Yeah, that's no trouble." "How the hell did he do it?" The little fellow jumped up on a chair and he grabbed the push by the throat. He said, "He pulled in his horns, like you're going to do, you great big gaping son-of-a-bitch."

3. THE RUBBER MINE I

Cougar McLay: One time an old friend of mine, his name is Red McKim. He's an old miner, an old prospector. He [and I] went mining one time in a rubber mine. We drilled and blasted. (This is a true story.) And about three years later when we were telling them we worked in a rubber mine, well most people think that rubber comes from trees and everything, you know. But you can mine it, you know. There [is] such a thing, but the only thing is once you blast, you've got to wait for years till the muck stops bouncing, you see. Red and me haven't been back to that mine yet. It hasn't stopped bouncing yet. A rubber mine. Most people don't believe there are rubber mines.

Taft: Where would these mines be located?

Cougar McLay: They're not too common, and your geiger counters and everything else won't pick it up at all, you know. It's not like uranium or stuff like that.

Taft: How do you mine it, once it stops bouncing?

Cougar McLay: Well you have to get it away. You know, you have to get it to a concentrator, and that's the tough part. Because rubber, once you get it going through the rod mills and ball mills it's pretty hard. It bounces away from your balls and your rods and stuff like that. It's pretty hard to concentrate. An expensive process.

4. THE RUBBER MINE II

Ernie Haggstrom: It's like this guy falling down a rubber mine. They had to shoot him so he wouldn't starve to death [from bouncing up and down the shaft].

5. TOFINO CABBAGES

Winnie Dixon: Tofino wasn't rainy then, you know, in those days. My goodness, you could bathe all winter. The Japanese current came along the coast. There were sharks and there were fish that were clear—you could see through them. Now they tell me that they even have snow and frost! But in those days the cabbages used to grow up so you could go underneath them.

6. A NEW USE FOR WATERMELONS

Lou Newell: I read here a story not too long ago . . . and somebody said something about watermelons out in the Prairies. They grow so big. Why in B.C., they even use them to hold their propane gas in.

7. PAUL BUNYAN'S ARCHIVES

There are tall tales told of a legend old, from the West Coast clear to Maine,
Of the Blue Ox Babe, Paul Bunyan's aid, that would tantalize your brain;
There are yarns galore of logging lore that are strange and far-fetched, too.
But for pastime's fun this takes the bun, 'cuz it proves those tales are true.

On a timber cruise, where you don't get news (but you sometimes hear a joke),
We had tramped all day, and at night we lay inhaling the camp fire's smoke.
'Neath a big windfall, in the timbers tall, we sat there toasting our toes,
In a circle of light, in a sea of night, where the tree trunk columns arose,
And it seemed we could hear, now far, now near, the brawl from a canyon's brink,
Or a rubbing tree creaked parody to every thought we'd think.
The wolf-pack's cry, from the bluffs nearby, re-echoed its mournful wail,
As Hi-Ball began to spill this tall Paul Bunyan tale.

"Now this mythical Paul," said Hi-Ball, "was the acme of logging perfection,
For he and his ox piled the mighty rocks of the great Coast Range projection.
"That ox's bellow was deep and mellow, yet as loud as a thousand bassoons,
And its eyes glowed bright in the dead of the night, like two luminescent blue moons.
So great was its size that between those eyes was a forty-nine axe-handle span;
And the giant Paul, though stupendously tall, was a kind and benevolent man.
The Puget Sound he dug out of the ground as a place for Babe to wallow,
And the Babe's appetite when feeling right—twelve tons of hay he'd swallow.
Oh it sounds like a crack from a maniac, whose reasoning powers have been twisted;
But the proof I found, deep down in the ground, that the Big Blue Ox existed.

"It was back in the years when we logged with steers and considered donkeys were freaks;
In the virgin brush, where the white streams rush from the snow-clad Cascade peaks.
Now you'll open your eyes when I tell you the size of some of those forested giants,
For the size of those trees would an Einstein tease and baffle the annals of science.
So huge they were (both cedar and fir) that days were spent in their falling,
And the ground would shake with an evil quake, for their thunderous crash was appalling;
But the prize of them all that we started to fall had the growth of profusion attained,
And I knew in a trice without eyeing it twice—this monster was Bunyan ordained.

"Three days we chopped, and chopped, and chopped, three days from dawn 'till dark!
Three nights we chopped and never stopped; but didn't get down through the bark.
Now there was a tree, believe you me!—what made it so big was a mystery.
So we stopped for a talk, and we took a walk, while we pondered over its history;
And we compassed its flank, like a river bank—in and out of each root-flanked canyon,
'Til we watched the sun when the day was done hand the night to its fairer companion.
The soft, pale light from that moon at night limned its trunk to the heavens streaming,
And I pinched my flesh to remind me afresh that surely I couldn't be dreaming.

"We trekked in and out and around about the columns that 'rose from its base;
'Til we seemed to sense, with a feeling tense, that we trod in a hallowed place;
That our lives we'd dreamed—until now it seemed we were insects, merely
creeping.
Then I heard a shout, and I turned about, and I knew that I hadn't been sleeping:
'Twas another crew—and the great chips flew from the trunk of that very same tree

From whence we had tried, on the opposite side, to unravel its mys-ter-y;
But it wasn't no use—they'd run out of snoose, and the tree was too God-awful big:
So they joined our force as their only course, and the bunch of us started to dig.

"Now we didn't say quit 'til we'd burrowed a pit at its base, in search of a clue —
In hopes we'd discover and maybe uncover the proof that my hunch had been true.
Then, an oxen's yoke, all splintered and broke, was unearthed from the depths down there,
And *Babe* was inscribed on its petrified side—and I noticed a monstrous blue hair!

There were harness rings—big, ponderous things, and a diary carved in the rocks
That told us the story, the power and the glory of Paul and his Big Blue Ox.
So we buried them there with reverent care to preserve them from civilization,
And to finish my yarn—'twas the site of Babe's barn, and the acme of fertilization!"

There are tall tales told of a legend old, from the West Coast clear to Maine,
Of the Blue Ox, Babe, Paul Bunyan's aid, that would tantalize your brain;
There are yarns galore of logging lore that are strange and far-fetched, too,
But for pastime's fun Bill took the bun when he proved those tales are true.

[Robert E. Swanson]

8. THE TREE BRIDGE I

Keith McColl: There was a farmer up in the Cariboo, and he had to get these cattle across the river. He had fifty head to get across the river. The water in the Fraser was so turbulent that he didn't want to chance swimming them across, so he went out and he figured it out. He knew of a big hollow tree right next to the riverbank; so he cut the big hollow tree down, felled it across the river, and then he proceeded to march his cattle across in the hollow tree. When he got to the other side, he counted his cattle, and he found there were fifteen missing. So he walked down through the hollow tree to the other end and he found out that the fifteen head of cattle had fallen through the knotholes.

9. THE TREE BRIDGE II

Gilbert Haines: This rancher had his cattle up there in one of the valleys in B.C. where the cedars grow big and fast. He was driving them to market this time, and after a heavy rain the bridge had washed out. Well he wasn't stopped. He put his cowboys to chopping this big cedar down across the stream, and went across and lopped the top of it out, and drove his cattle through the hollow log. And [he said] to the man he was telling this to, "I got across, right through this hollow log." "Well, [the other] said, "You mean to say you got your cattle to market that way?" "All but a few. They strayed off into hollow limbs."

10. THE TREE BRIDGE III

Ernie Haggstrom: The one I heard was about the guy on [the] Queen Charlotte Islands. They couldn't get across a big gulley. So they fell a great big fir tree across it. Topped the branches off the top, and then everybody went on the other side and started falling and then the big trucks would drive across the tree and pick up the logs and start driving back. And this worked out for about a week. One day the foreman come along and he's driving a jeep, and he started across. All of a sudden there's a big logging truck coming towards him. He didn't know what to do, so he just put the jeep in reverse and backed on [to] a branch, and let the truck go by.

11. THE PETRIFIED FOREST

Taft: Did you hear him [the liar, Bugram] yourself?

Harry Richardson: Oh yeah, you know I used to, as a kid, go up to the barroom with my dad and some of these old guys would be around. He [Bugram] started telling these stories. He was telling a story to him [dad] one night about somewhere down in the States. He was down in one of the petrified forests, and he was telling him about how everything was petrified there. Petrified trees and petrified animals and petrified birds—birds, animals, everything. "Yes," he said, "the birds were even singing petrified songs." But that was the stories he would tell—no harm to anybody.

12. A CHINESE CHRISTMAS

Lou Newell: Anyway, near Christmas, usually you have a story for around Christmas. I'll tell you about my adventures when I was a young boy, fellow, back in China. Now the first part of December I landed a job on a freight boat. It was some boat. So dressing like a coolie, I went aboard. Immediately I was put to work loading rice. When all was loaded, we were off up the Yangtse River. Just west of Chungking, that river became so crooked they had hinges built in the boat so that we could go around the river bends. I left there and returned to Chungking. While looking for a new, an easier job, I met a Chinese family who insisted that I stay for Christmas and share their meal. I never saw a table so long in my life. Why that table was so long that they started serving at noon on the 25th of December and the last man was served on the 24th of December the next year.

The Amazing Climate

13. CARIBOO AIR

Keith McColl: There was a young lad up in the Cariboo. He got a phone call from his doctor. His doctor was down in Vancouver. And his mother was also—that's why the doctor phoned—the mother was in the hospital. The doctor said to the young lad, "If you want to see your mother alive, you better come down here as fast as you can, because she's in very bad health." The young lad couldn't rake up enough money during the Depression there to buy a bus ticket down. Couldn't get a ride down. So he borrowed a bicycle and he rode all the way from the Cariboo down to the Vancouver General. He parked his bike outside the General and went up into the room that his mother was in. The doctor was there at the same time, and the doctor says, "I'm glad you're here now, your mother is really low. She's gasping for breath and we don't know how long she'll last, but if she could just get some of that good Cariboo air, it may save her." The young lad was pretty alert. He ran down and he got his bicycle and he took it up into his mother's room and he let all the air out of the tires. And his mother was revived. She's running a welding shop down in Main Street now.

14. HEALTHY COUNTRY

IS THE COUNTRY HEALTHY?

The country is healthy. There never was a healthier place under the sun. These are a sample of the answers that will be given in every instance to persons who ask the above question. I am not sure that any person there has been sick of more than what are called ordinary indispositions; and I am sure that no person has died there since the mining excitement started, unless within the last week, or since the latest news came from there. There was a doctor—a man of acknowledged ability—one of the best in the country, came out there to practice at the time the rainy season commenced, the most unhealthy time during the year, but it was no use, there was nothing for him to do there, so he packed up and left.

A CURIOUS INCIDENT

While in Eastern Canada I heard of a place out in the Western states so healthy that they had to shoot a man to start a burying ground. But a better story than this can be told about Granite Creek, as it seems that even in that way they cannot start a burying ground. I saw a cowboy shoot a man in the forehead with the most murderous-looking revolver I ever saw, and at a distance of not more than two or three rods. Whether the above object was what he intended, or what it was I do not know; but the facts of the case are: When shot the man fell like an ox, but was instantly on his feet again, and has been going around attending to his business ever since. His name is James Newlan. How it was that he lived is a mystery that I cannot explain; neither have I heard any explanation given that seemed at all satisfactory in regard to it.

[P.L. Trout; 1886]

15. A SOUTHERN HEAT WAVE

Lou Newell: This is about some hot weather. I was doing this little narrative for the magazine here and we had this Okanagan heat wave back in June. Well, it reminded me of a time in the deep South. Now it's hot down there—in fact, I recall a day it was so hot that the popcorn growing in the fields started popping right on the stem. Those fields turned white with popcorn in seconds. A donkey standing nearby thought it had snowed and immediately froze to death.

16. COLD CONVERSATION I

Lou Newell: Some years ago I was patrolling in the north country. In those days there was dog teams, snow and cold weather. Why I seen it so cold that the mercury would curl up underneath the themometer and shiver. Pine trees would snap like shotguns in the silence of those days. One time while on patrol, I recall that my partner and I tried to converse, but our words literally hung frozen in the air. That night we started our fire and put the coffee pot on. When it was ready, we sat the pot on the edge of the fire. Now when supper was ready, we went to pour the coffee and found that one side of the pot was frozen while the other half was still boiling. Going to bed that night, we had to break off the candle flame, because it had frozen. And we threw it out the tent. But in the north, one does get used to some of these small inconveniences. Later that spring we were on another patrol, [and] we heard quite a conversation. We arrived at the right time to hear our words as they thawed out.

17. COLD CONVERSATION II

Taft: You ever hear any stories about people speaking in cold weather?

Duncan MacMillan: And thawing them out, yeah, that's common—that's how you leave messages. You pick up the frozen words and you take it in and you thaw it out.

18. WHISTLING IN THE COLD

Gilbert Haines: They built this railroad right between our house and barn. Everything we did was across that [track]. But train-day was Thursdays. It rolled right in front of our house. It always whistled. There was one of these cross signs that would have a W for "whistle." The train whistled as it came through on Thursday. This one awful darn cold day it didn't whistle. We thought, well, there's something the matter. The [engineer] could get into trouble for not whistling. Because there could be a car going by. But a couple of days later—we lived out in that chinook country out northeast of Lethbridge—a chinook comes through from the Crowsnest [Pass]. And as soon as the chinook come through, it [the train] whistled.

19. THE FROZEN FLAME

Keith Henderson: Up in that north country, you know, there was some things that were pretty easy. When he [his father] used to go out trapping two or three days in a row, he always took a candle with him. He lit the candle and he put it on a stump. Because when he'd come home at night—even if it was two or three days later, it was all right—because he had a guiding light to come home to. It was so cold, you see, the candle froze, and the flame was there. It wouldn't go out until he took it inside and thawed it out, then he could blow it out.

20. A QUICK FREEZE

Gilbert Haines: There was always the cold weather stories. And there's several versions of where you throw the hot water out the door in the open and it would freeze before it hit the ground: the ice was still hot.

21. TRAVELS IN THE NORTH

I was up north trapping and the weather turned cold; didn't know how cold as the mercury froze in the bulb. I thought to heck with it and got my new Model "A" pick-up out and was going to California for the winter. Not being too stakey; I decided to take some mink, silver fox, and couple of those one horned nrocinus along and sell them to animal farms in the States. (They were all easy to catch as they hung around the chimney on the sod roof of my dugout) The trip didn't start out too good as I got a couple of punctures right off the bat; it was alright in a way as it was too cold for the tires to go flat. (Actually I was in California for two weeks before they thawed out enough to be repaired.) While waiting in a bar getting the tires repaired, a bush pilot friend of mine coincidentally came in the bar. It turned out that he was there for the same reason and had been flying over the same area at the same time that I was there. He had some engine trouble and had to set down on a frozen cloud to make engine repairs. He said he was lucky as a real high wind came up just after he took off, and the sharp edges of that frozen cloud sliced the top right off that mountain, so now we know how some of those mountains got flat tops.

Yours truly

Duncan J. MacMillan

P.S. I made a mistake and took two male nrocinus down to the States (hard to tell the difference).

22. THE ICE PATCH

Lou Newell: Now I'll tell you one. We were going along and it's a beautiful morning. And it started to snow, and those snow flakes, they came down so thick that they were the size of little blankets. They piled up in front of us [and] all of the sudden we had to come to a stop. We went off the road. We hit a small cabin. We didn't know what to do, so we got a log there and cleared away some snow. Tied it [the log] on the front, and nothing would happen, because the wheels were spinning—but you know how we solved that?

We took a couple of boards off the roof, tied them in a cross, tied them to the fan of the engine, after taking the radiator off, and got it started. And we was able to pull ourselves right out with those fans. Now we get on the road. Take it all off. Put the radiator back on to keep things going right, eh? So we were going down the road, and just near Kamloops, we had a flat tire. Well, this was getting towards evening; you get awfully cold. We had a guy in the back who used to be proud of himself blowing smoke rings. So we got him out of the car. He blew a smoke ring. It got cold; it froze, and we put it on [the wheel] and away we went the rest of the way into Kamloops.

23. THE FROZEN KISS

Charles Simpson: Once upon a time many, many years—or moons—ago, this little Eskimo boy and little Eskimo girl, they played together all day long. But like other boys and girls, they grew up. And so they fell in love. They went behind the igloo one winter and they kissed. And it froze. And they had to stay behind the igloo all winter, because they were embarrassed to come out. The next spring when the sun came up, finally, well of course the kiss unfroze and they were able to get separated. And that's why, to this day, Eskimos rub noses.

24. A COLD CALL OF NATURE I

Duncan MacMillman: You see in Mountain Park, for instance, it's been known to go [to] 62 below zero. And you've heard that story about when you're outside and you have to go for a pee. Well, when you're peeing, [it freezes so rapidly] you have to back up.

25. A COLD CALL OF NATURE II

Ernie Haggstrom: He said he was up in the Northwest Territories and the themometer read seventy [below]. He's got his dog sled, and all of the sudden he's got to pee. He's got four inches of clothes—and he's got this two inches of him standing there taking a pee. And he had to walk backwards three steps so he could finish, because it froze as fast as he peed.

26. COLD COMFORT

Reude Berry: Well, Fort Chimo is on the Koksoak River which empties into Ungava Bay. The army base that I first started working on was Operating Location One, or Chrystal One, which was six miles upriver from Fort Chimo. And then we went from there to Frobisher Bay, which is in the Arctic Circle. And cold! Listen, it is *cold* up there. I mean in the winter, the Eskimos keep a fire and when the flame freezes, break them off and they gave them to the kids. Now that only kept the kids quiet; gave them, you know, something sweet, and it was also heat, because it [was] cold!

The year before I arrived up there, [and] I went up in '46, it got so cold that a few people were freezing to death, literally freezing to death. They took all the blankets and all the hides they had and they stitched them all together like a balloon with an opening. And at night all the people around would go inside and they would just pile up in there like cordwood. Now this is okay, because you're going to get body heat from people close to each other. But there's still not enough [heat] because when your're sleeping, your heart slows down and so consequently your body temperature will drop slightly.

So they decided they would have two people stay outside, and they would stay warm by gently rolling this big ball back and forth. [After] two hours outside the ball, they would open up the hole, and whoever was there, they'd pull two [others] out, and they would climb back in. That's the way they handled cold. I can't tell you much about the summers up there. I think the year I was up there it came on a Wednesday.

27. FROZEN STIFF

This is a story my dad used to tell, he was building boats on the Athabasca River, just after the turn of the century. And during the winter one of the crew that was boat-building expired. They couldn't dig a grave. So they laid him out flat on the ground with his arms at his sides. Eventually, he froze stiff. Then they took a big file and sharpened his toenails and drove him in the ground with a sledgehammer.

[Anonymous; 1982]

28. RACING THE CHINOOK

GILBERT HAINES: You must have heard the old classic, the old chinook story? Haven't you?

TAFT: Well I'd like to hear your version of it.

GILBERT HAINES: We lived northeast of Lethbridge. We'd go to Lethbridge once every so often to get our supplies. And as a kid, I finally got to go. We'd go by team and bobsleigh. I'd have to watch into the southwest for the chinook arch [while] my dad would be in doing the shopping. [If I saw] this arch showing up or the west wind, I was supposed to tell him, and he'd head for home. And we'd very seldom ever make it home. You'd get to the point where the front [of the] sleigh would be running in the snow and the back in the mud, and the dog [behind] would be kicking up dust.

29. CHINOOK HANG-UPS

HARRY RICHARDSON: We used to hear that story all the time when we were kids. These old guys would get talking about the chinooks at nighttime and they brought this one out about old Sheriff Redgrave. The big chinook that he experienced. He was called out to some—lumbercamp. So he went and he happened to arrive there at mealtime. [There was] a little tree sticking up through the snow, so he just dropped the reins of the horse over the top of the tree and went in to supper. Of course he knew a bunch of the boys in there. After supper they engaged him in a poker game and he forgot all about the horse until the wee hours of the morning. [He] rushed outside to see the horse, [and] he found it hanging about twenty feet up in the tree. The chinook had come through and melted all the snow. Oh yeah, that was one of the stories you'd hear some of those old boys telling.

30. MORE CHINOOK HANG-UPS

I'm from southern Alberta, and we get lots of snow, but we also get lots of chinooks. In the wintertime, when the little kids go to school, they all have to walk along hanging on to the power lines or the transmission lines as a guide. And you learn very young to keep hanging on to these lines, because if you don't, when the chinooks come: there you are—stranded. So after the chinooks all the parents have to drive along the transmission lines picking off all these little kids, hanging by their hands.

[Anonymous, 1982]

31. THE STRONG WIND

Lou Newell: Yeah, the thing is that, back on the prairies, where the wind blows around. Lethbridge—the wind blows there quite strongly at times. And they were going to have to put this fence through. So somebody says they're going to have to get a fencepost-hole-digger. And somebody says, "No, the wind blows here so strongly, we'll wait a couple of days and the wind will blow us our [fence] holes in.

32. THE WIND GAUGE

There is a town in the Kootenays that is known for its strong winds. Outside the town hall there is a wind gauge made up of a post with an anvil attached to the top of it by a length of chain. You know it's going to be a windy day when the chain is straight out from the post.

33. THE CARIBOO DUST STORM

Bruce Watt: They used to get some awful dust storms back in the mountains. One guy was telling me—I don't know whether to believe him—but he said that the dust was blowing so bad that a gopher went by him about ten feet up, and he was digging down.

He's the same guy who told me the wind was blowing so bad and it was coming through the keyhole at such a rate, it took three guys to plug the keyhole with a big old army blanket.

34. GUMBO MUD

Bruce Watt: In those days we lived with the mud, especially in the spring. You know, it was really bad. Gumbo mud, big mud holes in the middle of the road. Old Dick Church, who went [into the Cariboo] in the early 1900s was a real character in that country, and he taught me a lot about mud holes. But they always tell the story about Dick, between his place and Cecil Henry's, [when] he ran into Cecil. Cecil was in the mud hole [with] just his head sticking out. And Dick—a pretty good neighbour—said, "Can I give you a hand?" You know, "Let me hand you out." And Cec said, "Oh no, I'm all right; I'm riding a pretty good horse."

35. WET WEATHER IN THE OKANAGAN

CHARLES SIMPSON: It was a wet summer. The landlord asked me to water his flowers while he was away for eleven days. So instead of watering them, I put each one on those flagstones over there.

One afternoon it wasn't raining too much, so I decided to go to a little peninsula and throw out a line. It was soggy weather, because in the Kelowna area at one time this used to be all marsh. In the spring it would be covered by water [and] it's still marshy in some areas. So I went out, and this robin flew by me. It was wet underfoot and this robin found this worm through his own listening habits. You know how they act. And of course when he made the dive on the ground and pulled on this worm, I expected the worm to come out readily—the wet ground and all that. But it didn't occur. They're quite determined, these robins. They got a lot of strength, I think, too. So he backed up a couple of times and then finally the ground, soft ground, opened up. And out pops this slim trout, about that long [holds hands out about six inches]. I might have even thrown it back, but of course it was such a unique thing, I kept it. I didn't even bother throwing a line out, just filletted it and put [it in with] a little batter along with some rough-cut potatoes. Battered them. Put them in the frying pan and had fish and chips.

36. HEAVY FOG

CHRISTOPHER BRAYSHAW: Oh yes, one day in the McBroom's place there was this giant fog that covered everything. And the catfish, not being aware of where the river ended and where the fog began, just swam on through the fog. And the McBrooms were constantly picking up these pesky animals that managed to swim through the air into nearly everything and anything.

37. NORTH COUNTRY FOG

LOU NEWELL: Seeing the fog the other day remined me of the fogs in the north country. Why I remember it was so thick at times, we just stayed tied to the cabin by a long rope, just so we could get to the well and to the wood pile. And this way we wouldn't get lost, you see, by being tied. Now during one of these foggy days I heard the honk of wild geese flying overhead. I grabbed a shotgun, fired into the air at the sound and then waited. Thud. Something struck the ground. I went over and there lay a dead fox, laced with buckshot. That fog had been so thick that fox was chasing the geese along the top.

38. A NEW BRUNSWICK FOG

Ruede Berry: It's funny you mention fog, though. Because I can remember Saint John, New Brunswick. There has got to be the world's worse city for fog. I used to knock around with this girl there that lived in Saint John, and her neighbor was shingling his garage roof. And this fog rolled in. When the fog rolled out, he had shingled two feet past the end of the garage. But that was just really a normal fog bank.

Taft: What was a heavy one like?

Reude Berry: The worst one, I think, and I just got the tail end of that really. In the last couple of days. I heard a flock of geese honking, and that's nothing. Well, you'd normally hear a flock of geese up there honking above you. But what you don't expect to hear is a goddamned coyote barking behind them. That's a heavy fog. Yeah, at the army barracks there in Saint John, if you were going downtown, especially on weekends—and foggy—they would give you a baseball bat to beat the fog off.

39. VANCOUVER FOG

Ernie Haggstrom: There's one story that was told to me about fog in Vancouver. And there was a fourteen-day fog that I worked through in Vancouver, but this guy told the story. He was in a boat—he was a fisherman [and] he ran out of gas and he didn't know what to do. He had his compass and he knew he was getting pretty close to Stanley Park, [but] he didn't know what the heck to do. Anyway, finally, he just gave up. He could hear foghorns and everything all over the place; he got out of the boat—out of the cabin—and looked, and he knew what direction Stanley Park was. So he climbed up on the fog, walked on top of the fog, and when he got to a tree in Stanley Park he climbed down the tree.

40. BELLA BELLA FOG

Michael Donoghue: I remember Mike [Sadonovich] telling me about the fog. The fog up in Bella Bella is thick, it's really thick. When it comes in off the ocean, there's nothing in that area like here. In the Vancouver area we have Vancouver Island blocking the coast. But up there there is just wide open Pacific and when the fog comes in off the Pacific, it's thick. And I remember Mike telling us about this fog that came in. It was so thick that if you held your arm out in front of you, you'd swear it was cut off at the elbow. He was out in his boat one day and the fog was really thick this day. It came rolling in, and being an old hand up there he had lots of food. It was just a little, small, outboard that he was on. He'd taken lots of food with him and water and that, because he knew once the fog came in you just sat there until it lifted. Well, this one fog, it rolled in and it was thick. It was the thickest fog he'd ever seen. So he shut down and he sat there two or three days. And he sat there. Finally the fog started lifting, and sure enough, you know, he was okay. The only problem was the fog was so thick that he'd drifted half a mile inland, and he had to drag the boat back to shore.

41. CLAYOQUOT FOG

Ray Logie: But speaking of fog, anyway, there was this really, really bad fog. This was off the west coast, around Clayoquot, Tahsis, and these fog banks would come in and they would stay forever. And it would just be incredibly thick. And they would all be out fishing or gill-netting or seining or trawling or whatever. Commercial [fishing]—that's the biggest industry up there. And they were out fishing. That was their job. "It was so bad," one guy said, "when you were on deck and you wanted to light a cigarette, you had to go below to see if your match was lit." The cook on one of the seine-netters [sent] up empty sandwiches and a mug of hot water, and the crew thought they were eating good. A guy said, "Look, we lost a third of our catch. We'd bring our nets on deck and half those—a third of our damn fish just swam right off through the fog. We lost one-third of our catch that year." And there was one guy who said his brother was inshore fishing, and that fog came right in and settled right over the coast, right over the villages. You couldn't see a thing. And it just wouldn't go away that year. This guy was trolling in his rowboat—in a clinker-built. [And the] fog was so thick he gaffed a fish swimming two feet above the water. He said the only reason he didn't fall out of the boat [was because] he leaned against the fog.

42. MORE CLAYOQUOT FOG

Ray Logie: One of the gill-netters ran up on a fog bank and sank, but the crew survived because they cut a hole through the fog and crawled to safety. That was really fog.

This guy who was out there during this fog, probably '33, fog of '33, said, "Well, you anchor, you see, and when it got bad"—because they had no radio navigation; these guys just carried their radar in their head, eh? They were terrific.

But he had to get home, because he had to get married the next bloody day in this village. I think it was Clayoquot or Tahsis. So he was going to go home. But he managed to reach the village through this bloody fog. Anyhow, he got home and he made the wedding. They got married. And you know, his wife was pregnant with his first child before he found out he was in the wrong village, when the fog lifted.

THE WILD, THE TAME, AND THE MOSQUITO

The need to exaggerate the traits and abilities of animals extends beyond geographical and mental boundaries. The following tales might be classified according to how the animal is remarkable, but any attempt at a specific and scientific categorization seems pointless. The first section of this chapter is devoted to tales of moderate exaggeration in which the true qualities of an animal are played upon by the truth-stretcher. That some fish are rather large, wolverines tough, wolves voracious, dogs smart and draft animals strong cannot be denied. But these qualities can be exaggerated beyond the point of credibility, as the storytellers show. In addition, the truth-stretchers do considerable damage to our notions of biology and genetics in such stories as the split dog tales and "A Tall Tail."

The second section of this chapter is concerned with exaggerations farther afield. Here the natural characteristics of animals are not merely exaggerated but reversed as well. In these six stories the wild become tame, breaking any number of natural laws in the process. The third section contains tales which explore the farthest reaches of the imagination, since the beasts described here will not be found in any textbook on zoology. The reader might wonder why this section does not include stories about Ogopogo, the sasquatch and Cadborosaurus; indeed there is only one story about Ogopogo here, as well as two others that concern the sasquatch in other sections of the book ("By-God Stafford Tells a Lie" and "Sasquatch Bites the Biscuit"). The reason is that most such stories are not intended by the teller or the listener as tall tales. Rather, they are told in order to prove, disprove, or show concern over the possibility that such creatures actually exist. Thus they are essentially more serious in nature than the tall tale, and are closer to ghost stories, tales of flying saucers and other supernatural legends in their treatment of the incredible. The one Ogopogo tale and the two sasquatch stories in this book are unusual in that they treat these legendary creatures in the light, pranking style of the tall tale.

The last section of this chapter is reserved for the mosquito (and one strange concoction by Lou Newell about locusts). If one is to judge by these tales, the most feared beast in the British Columbia wilderness is neither the grizzly nor the wolf; the mosquito is the most ravenous and bloodthirsty of them all. Unlike the Prairies, where the grasshopper shares equal billing with the mosquito, or central Canada, where the black fly is a match for any other creature, the mosquito reigns supreme in British Columbia. They range from the small one-pound variety to the somewhat larger horse and cow eaters to the mammoth species that frequent airports. True, some of these tales concern mosquitoes from beyond the province's borders, but this reflects the natural migration patterns of these insects.

Remarkable Animals

43. THE ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY

Cougar McLay: I was fishing off the bank and I hooked onto something. And that fish was a whopper. I couldn't pull the fish out and the fish couldn't pull me in. I was battling away there, and it was nip and tuck for about half an hour. And nobody was gaining, the fish or me. But an old cowboy comes along on a saddle horse—this is quite a few years ago. "Hey, partner, you're having quite a time with that fish out there." I said, "Yeah, I sure am." Well, he said, "I'll give you a hand to land it." So I tied my line around his saddlehorn. That was a big horse too, and it was all the horse could do to pull that fish in. I mean we used to get fish there—good ones. So anyway, after he had given me the horse to pull the fish out for me, I said to him, "Seeing as you helped me land the fish, would you like a chunk of that fish?" So he said, "I don't care for that fish, but you could give me those eyes for curling rocks, for sure."

44. THE ONE THAT DID

Bill Law: There was a guy who always had the biggest goddamn salmon. Always groaning about the biggest—got away, it always got away. "But this one I had the other day off Cape Mudge," he says, "I got it and I don't know what it weighs. By golly, I couldn't move it. I did get it up pretty near the boat, he broke everything—twisted everything up, broke the poles. And," he says, "by gosh, I wish I had got him." And so this other guy said, "I had a similar experience yesterday. I had one on there, boy, and I did get him up, and he had that goddamn five- or ten-pound channel bouy inside his mouth, and he had [other things] tangled up. By gosh, I thought, well I'll give it a gaff and just try and tow it. It jumped right up in the goldarn cabin," he says. "By gosh, I eventually got him over to the scow where the fellow was buying fish. Together we got him up to go and weigh him." This guy—the other boaster—he said, "How much did he weigh?" "I don't know. The both of us lifted him. We just got him over the scales, and he give a kick and over the side he went off the scow. Lost him," he said, "but the shadow weighed ninety pounds."

45. ONE DID AND ONE DIDN'T

During the war when I was master of one of the RCAF-HSLs (high speed launch) we were required to make a call at Port Alberni. Going down the Alberni Canal we were always required to go as slow as possible because of the extreme wash caused by these vessels. Now this slow travel was not good for the Packard Merlin engines and the spark plugs would foul up very badly. Because of this we made a practice of stopping at a point where we could change plugs and resume normal cruising.

Now while the engine room staff were changing the spark plugs, we were lying idle and drifting with the tide. As I waited I went up on deck and near the stern I came upon a tangled fish line. I picked it up and started to wind it, letting the lure drag in the water. At the same time I had one of the crewmen straighten out the bow line.

Some time had passed when for a test the engine room crew gave a kick on one of the engines, just enough to move the vessel a short distance; also just enough to start my lure spinning, and, bang, I had a strike. The salmon I had on took off up the side of the boat and a porpoise right after it. Now the seaman working the bow line had let the loop on the end into the water. The porpoise interested in the salmon failed to notice the loop in the bow line and ran right into it—fortunately the inboard end was secure, for it all ran out, and our friend towed us down the Alberni Canal. In the meantime, I was able to reel in the largest salmon I have ever caught. After some time, and realizing that the salmon had vanished, our porpoise friend got fed up with towing us, backed out of the loop and disappeared, with one last jump across our bow. Thus I had obtained a grand supper for us all and was ready to proceed, just as the chief stuck his head up to say let's go.

It actually happened.

[L.D. Thompson; 1982]

46. THE QUICK CAT

Reude Berry: Speed of animals. Now this is something. You know, I was off hunting; oh hell, this was back in New Brunswick. And I heard about this wild cat. And it was a fairly good size wild cat, but he was too fast. Everybody had missed him. But I had always been—well, especially when I was younger—real quick. I could sure get a snap shot off real fast and I usually hit what I aimed at. And this one day I saw this damned cat coming down the tree. The tree was sloped like so, and he was walking down the tree. And god, I had the safety off and I threw the rifle up. Well, he spotted the action, you know, turns and looks, and I fired. And I saw him going back up the tree, and I was thinking, "Damn, I couldn't've missed him. I *couldn't've* missed him." I didn't believe it. I kept walking there. I'm looking at the rifle. "What the hell's gone wrong?" I don't miss like that. I could throw my rifle up like that at a running grouse and I could take the head off the running grouse. So hell, a cat, the head the size of a cat, and it wasn't any more than fifty yards. How the hell could I miss? I was still thinking about this and walking up to him. When the damned cat came down the tree, I know there's something funny. He went down to the bottom of the tree and he picked his head up in his mouth and went back up the tree.

47. THE TOUGH WOLVERINE

Dixon Anderson: This happened to a trapper on the other side of the mountain here. Harry Bone was his name. Englishman, had been an Englishman. Anyway, but a great trapper. Good storyteller. He trapped a creek by the name of Bear Creek. So he was going up this creek looking at his traps, and he came on the wolverine that was in the trap. So he tapped him on the head, as usual, and stood on him for a little bit. And he had another little sideline there, a couple of traps up it, so he just left the wolverine in the trap and walked up this line and came back. And he got back; why the damn wolverine's up, just ready for a fight again. So he hit him again.

So he had another little line over to the side there on the other side. So he went up, looked at it, came back. Before he got back, he could hear the chain rattling. Said, "My god, what do I have to do to kill that wolverine?" He cut the wolverine's head off. Said, "I'll fix that son-of-a-gun." So he went up his centre line—[those were] the last traps. Before he got back he thought he could hear the chain rattling. He got back, and here's that wolverine sitting there putting his head back on.

48. STRETCHING THE TRUTH

Alex Pankoski: During the hungry thirties everybody went north. When they built a log shack they didn't have a square or a tape measure. So they went to town and got the lumber, but they had to guess how many feet was wanted. So they brought that lumber home and started laying them down, and it was six inches too short. What the heck are they going to do? Didn't want to leave a hole there in the side [of the cabin]. They got a bright idea. They pick up one of them [boards], tied it to a stump, hitched a big horse onto the other end [of the board] and they stretched the board six inches more.

49. OLD SKEETER

Reude Berry: Every time I look at the south end of that horse [a liar's contest trophy], it reminds me of a mule, when I was a kid back in the thirties. I was going out to the farm just about every weekend. I was shipped out to the farm because it was easier to send me out to the farm than it was to feed me. There was four of us in the family—mom, dad and four of us kids. And dad was having a pretty tough time, you know, feeding them.

I was in grade five or six. I was shipped out to the farm to stay, [and] I was big enough that I could do a little work around the farm. We had a bunch of mules on the farm and a couple of horses. But the mules got most of the work, the really tough work. This one old mule, Skeeter, was a little frisky whatnot. Coming down through the fields one day, the guys were in a hurry, [and] weren't paying too much attention to what they were doing. They drove him through a bunch of gopher holes, and he stepped into a gopher hole and broke his leg.

Grandpa was going to shoot him, but I said, "No, not do that. Let's see if maybe I could fix him up." I'd made fairly good friends with the vet, the registered vet, because we had a registered mare. I called him on the telephone, and he said he'd come out and have a look at old Skeeter. So anyway, he came out and said, "No, both bones are broken and there's no way that the leg would heal properly, but I have heard that you can amputate and if the animal really has a desire to live, [it] will learn to get along with one less leg. Deer do it—hell, they do it all the time. Deer and moose and coyotes and whatnot." So he said he would do the operation for nothing.

In fact he went ahead and did it, really. But Gramp was mad. He was furious. As far as he was concerned, around the place the animals had to earn their own keep. So he told me, "I'll give you a few weeks with old Skeeter. If old Skeeter can haul his weight or do his thing around here, then we'll keep him. He can earn his keep." "Well," I said, "I'll pay for his feed. I can snare rabbits, you know, and do a little trapping. So I can make enough—surely to goodness, I can make enough to pay for Skeeter's feed. He's not that big, only a small mule." Anyway, the vet had told me how to teach him to pull, and that was to put the harness on him and fasten a singletree to the ring there at the corner of the barn. And just get him to pull on it, slow, and get him to work at it. You know, he got pretty good with that. Just those three legs. He got so he could move around as good as any of the other mules, but he wasn't quite as graceful. And he'd forgotten how to kick. That was a good thing, because mules—when they want to let you have it, they let you have it good. He just couldn't kick; with one of his front legs gone, no way he's going to kick. Anyway, he was getting real strong—pulling against this building. I noticed that a couple of the boards that were right there at the ring were sort of bulging, so I decided maybe I'd better stop using the ring.

There was an old stump out in the field that had been bothering Gramp for quite a few years, and I took a skid chain and I went out and I threw it around the base of this stump and hooked the singletree to it. And I got old Skeeter to tighten up the tugs. I said, "Gyah! Go man!" Hey, that old stump came out. Surprised the hell out of me. [When] Gramp came home and he saw the stump gone, he says, "Who got the stump out?" And I says, "Old Skeeter pulled it out." "Ha! Skeeter couldn't pull that stump out. He couldn't pull it out if he was hooked to the other three of them [mules]." "Well," I said, "he pulled it out all by himself. I had him with a skid chain wrapped around it, and he pulled it out." Anyway, he started earning his keep, old Skeeter did. But he wouldn't pull for anybody but me. So that's the way I got—in later years I've been called the mule-skinner. But that's beside the point. That fall we got the haying in, and later we started bringing the potatoes and whatnot. Gramp broke his leg, and he was sitting around the house in a cast. Uncle Owen was in the hospital with the flu and something else. I don't know what it was. And I'm the only male with two solid legs, and, hell, I'm just a kid. Anyway, I got to thinking about it, that old Skeeter hauled that stump so damned easy, I got to thinking, "Well, now maybe if I get gramp---sort of get the chair sort of worked around there by the window going down to the root cellar." So I got him around there. It was in the shade; he liked it. Kind of warm. So I took old Skeeter and a singletree with a short chain, and I just hooked it to the end of the potato row. And I just pulled the row of potatoes right down and slowly took them past gramp, and he was kicking them down the shute, down the root cellar. And we just took one row after the other until we got them all done. Gramp was amazed. He said, "I've never heard of anything like this: pulling a whole row of potatoes without being on skids or on wheels? Boy," he said, "you got that mule working good for you."

Our neighbor came over and he was way behind on his haying. His man had quit him, so he asked gramp if I could go over there, and Gramp says, "Well, yeah. He can take Skeeter over." So old Ken says, "Hell, it wouldn't take long to cut this ruddy grass, you know, if it weren't for that stinking creek running down through it. It's twisting and turning and curving in around the creek that was taking all the time." So I got thinking about those potato rows, "What the hell, we'll give it a try." So I went down to one end of this property and I hooked onto the creek and I pulled it right out straight. [Then] I looped it back up into the trees. Hell, it was no trouble. It was no damn trouble, you know, mowing then. You had a nice, perfectly straight [field]. They changed the name of that creek. I think it's called Jay Creek now—if I recall.

50. A SMART DOG

Gilbert Haines: There's always the hunting dog story. And this one was bragging about his dog. Now his pet dog was just the smartest dog there is. He says, "If you pick up your rifle [to go] out hunting, he'll go out in the woods and round up the deer and moose. All I have to do is go out to pick the best one and shoot it." And he says, "When I pick up my shotgun, why he knows exactly what to do. He goes out and rounds the birds up and points them out to me and I just get the best birds. And it's the same when I pick up my fishing rod. "Now hold on," [the other] says, "you don't mean to tell me that that dog will go out in the water and round up the fish!" "No, but he goes in the backyard and digs worms."

51. ONE NOT SO SMART

Keith McColl: Business wasn't so good so this service station man thought he'd take his dog in and teach him how to play checkers. So the dog got pretty good at it. So one day tourists came in and they were amazed at this dog [that could] play checkers. So one day there was a tourist in and he was watching them play checkers. "Gosh," he [the tourist] says, "that dog, he's really good." The old guy was getting kind of mad about that. He says, "Well, he's not so good. I beat him twice yesterday."

52. BOWSER

Ray Logie: Now there was another one that was concocted by two old uncles of mine, while I was there, obviously for my benefit. At the time I was only 12 or 13. We were driving up island in a '26 Crysler and we passed a little village called Bowser, on Vancouver Island. There used to be an old pub there. I think it's burned down now. And clearly they were talking to each other, but with my rabbit ears, a little kid sitting in the car with them. It obviously was intended for me. As they passed Bowser one of my uncles said, "Oh, yeah, lookit, that was named after a dog: Bowser." "Yeah," and the other uncle said, "Yeah, they had that dog in that pub and he used to serve tables and [take] orders." And the other uncle developed it. "Yeah, it was there. And of course he could make change." and that was about the extent of it. But I remember the tall tale being developed by the two uncles. I don't know how long I believed that, but I finally realized I'd been had.

53. FLY-CASTING ON THE KICKING HORSE RIVER

Harry Richardson: Well, there was another one he told about when he was working up through the Kicking Horse Canyon. One day, looking down to the Kicking Horse River he saw a bear sitting out on a log. He said he'd seen this bear reaching down into the water for a bit. And then he'd get up, and he'd see his paw go up in the air like this [raises his hand in a sweeping motion] and he'd see his paw go down in the water again. And he said he began to wonder what that bear was [up to]. "So curious," he said. He decided to go down and see what the bear was up to. "Doggone," he said, "if that bear wasn't watching to see a fly come by. He'd grab this fly and put it on his claw and put it down into the water, and a fish would come along and take the bait."

54. A TRACE LEFT BEHIND

Gilbert Haines: It's about the pigs that are so fat, their shadows left greasy spots.

55. THE SPLIT DOG I

Reude Berry: A buddy of mine had this dog that loved, really loved to chase rabbits. And he never caught them. He just wasn't quick enough dodging. And back in New Brunswick there was a frozen field with a crust, and it had rained a little bit, like sleet—I shouldn't say rain. It was just a glare of ice, and the young fellow was out with the dog to get the cattle. The dog spotted a rabbit, and that rabbit was a smart son-of-a-bitch. That dog was right on his tail and he was heading straight for a frozen wire birch—an old wire birch is a little thin—just straight onto that and he dodged at the last minute. The dog put the brakes on, but no go. He hit that thing straight on. Split him right in half. The kid ran up to him—it was cold—the kid grabbed the two halves and stuck them together, and they sort of froze. He carried the dog home and laid it down. His mother was darning or sewing something, so she just stitched around [the dog]. Jeeze, when she got him all stitched and he started to thaw out, she noticed her mistake. He had two feet pointing up and two feet pointing down. One of them figured, "Well hell, we'll see how the dog behaves."

He was the best rabbit dog ever after that, because he'd just gallop along on two legs. When the rabbit dodged, he'd just flip over on the other two legs and keep right on going.

56. THE SPLIT DOG II

Gilbert Haines: In 1930 my uncle was up to the Prairies from New Brunswick. And another uncle was visiting there with my dad. And my mother was away visiting her folks in Indiana. They sat there, my dad and his two brothers. This one from New Brunswick sitting there with a straight face. He told about one time down in Maine they were logging. And this one particular morning came along and there was about twenty inches of light, fluffy snow [on the ground]. And they were all out there with their double-bladed axes. And they spent more time sharpening axes to see who could get the most trees cut in those days. Nowadays you'd take more time to stand around rather than cut, but that was the old days. One fellow came and he brought his little white fox terrier along. Just a little thing. Every once in a while his head would pop up [from the snow] to see where [he] was at. This fellow happened to take a break once to roll a cigarette, and he leaned back and sat on the end of the handle of his double-bladed ax. While he rolled his cigarette, his little dog ran into the sharp bit of the ax, and as he said, "It cut it right in two." He grabbed the two pieces out of the snow and popped them together [clapping his hands], but he got two legs up and two legs down. And [the dog] went off, two legs up and two legs down.

57. A TALL TAIL

Gilbert Haines: When [Bob Burns] was small, he was visiting on his great uncle's farm. And this old sow took after him; he run around and around a barrel for quite a while, [then] he tipped the barrel over and set the barrel back up and stayed under that. She [the sow] went around and around the barrel. There's always a bunghole in the side of old wooden barrels. When she calmed down and stopped, he could reach her tail; he reached out and grabbed the tail and tied a knot in it inside [the barrel]. And off she went off with the barrel.

"Last we seen," he says, "she was going over the hill. And that's the last we seen her." The next spring him and his uncle was out fixing fence, and he heard this great thrashing noise. He didn't know what on earth that could be. So he took to a tree to see what was going on. And here came this old sow back with a lot of wee pigs. Every one with a little keg on its tail.

The Tame and the Not-So-Tame

58. BUSTER TEGART STEERS FOR SHORE

One old timer and master story teller, Buster Tegart, died a couple of years ago. But his stories remain, and some are very tall.

He told me, "When I was your age there was just the Big Dipper and the North Star in the sky." He also mentioned how he used to cross the river at Athalmer, B.C. (then called, the Salmon Beds) before they built the bridge over the Columbia River. He would take a 3-prong pitchfork and drive the middle tine into a big old salmon. Then spear two smaller ones with the two outside tines. Then hop on board placing each foot on the smaller salmon and ride across. He could steer them by tilting the handle.

[Larry Halverson; 1982]

59. THE TAME FISH I

Donald Seymour: I don't know how well I can tell this story. She told me a story about being down in White Rock. So it's a fish story. Down in White Rock [when] the tide comes in and goes out [it] leaves little pools in the beach. Well, in this pool there happened to be a fish, and the fish was swimming around in this isolated pool. And because a friend of mine became so enthralled [with] it, she got a pail of water and put the fish in and took it home. Put it in the bathtub. Then the fish became so accustomed to her, he used to get out and follow her around the house. This went on for a while, and the fish grew to quite a size. She decided maybe the fish should go back to where it came from. Down around where they were, there was a train trestle that went across. And the little fish was slippity-slapping along and got onto the trestle and fell in the creek below and drowned.

60. THE TAME FISH II

Joyce Kind: When him and his wife and the kids were young they had a cabin [where they] would go during the summer. And they found the fish. It was sort of half-dead and just washed up, you know, with the tide. The kids ran home and got water and put the fish in, [and] took it home and put it in a big washtub full of water. It would flip back and forth, back and forth. One day it flipped out of the washtub, and it flipped back. Realizing it could move, it wandered around the house a bit. They nicknamed the fish Buddy. It finally became so friendly they were able to let it come out; it would follow them [for] longer and longer periods each time, then they put it back in [the tub]. They were going to take a walk this day to Blaine, so Buddy came along. He was flip-flopping along the railway tracks, and they went over the trestle and Buddy fell in and drowned.

61. THE WRONG DOG

Alex Pankoski: There was lots of wild dogs that break loose and get away and they're gone. Now this Pete Hansen, he was a trapper there. He was a big guy, about six-foot two and shoulders like that [holds out hands]. So at supper time in the spring, Hansen was over. He said, "I'm going to get some light traps set, try to catch some of those dogs and have a dog team." So he went. He set them out. Went to check them every day. Finally one day he went out in the morning, and he wasn't back, and he wasn't back. Towards noon, Big Frank wondered what happened to Pete. Finally Pete comes in, all ragged, torn, scratched. "What happened to you?" "Well," he said, "I got one, and I had one hell of a time to get him tied up." And he went down to the canoe and he had him [the dog] here in the bottom all hog-tied in the canoe. Frank went down and he said, "Damn fool, [you've] got a timber wolf there."

62. THE WRONG GRIZZLY I

Hubert Hall: I was trapping up in the Big Bend of the Columbia River one winter, and there was a young cub grizzly came around my fence. Somebody must have shot his mother, I think, because it became very tame. So I fed it and cooked up a mess of beans and rice and fed it all winter. It didn't even go and hibernate. It grew and grew and got bigger and bigger. A big skookum bear. And we got [to] be the greatest pals, you know, that bear and I. In the summer I went back down to Revelstoke and did a lot of work down there. I went back up trapping next winter, and here on the doorstep was this bear. He stayed with me all that winter. So I went down next summer, land-surveying. The third winter came along, and I got up to the cabin, and there was the same old bear. He'd grown into a big fine fellow by this time. And as I went along my traplines picking up the mink and martin and otter and those things, he come with me. Sometimes the snow was very, very deep. And I, at last, trained that bear so I could ride him. He knew as much as I did about the bush. In fact, I think a damn sight more. However, what I did though, I put two slits in his ears, so if I would see him, I wouldn't shoot him, you see. I didn't want to mistake him for a wild bear. So the following winter came along, and my bear's a little older that winter. And every time I went over the traplines, I rode him. And the next winter came along, and there was a nice, fat bear right on my doorstep. So I put the rifle away and I put the packs away, and I jumped on his back and shouted at him and—you won't believe it—that bear was crazy. He jumped this way and that way, tried to climb trees, go down in the canyon, cross rivers, creeks, and I wondered what had happened to him. I put my hands on his ears and found out I was riding the wrong bear.

63. THE WRONG GRIZZLY II

I was hunting one spring a few years ago near Creston when I killed a grizzly. On reaching the dead bear, I found it was a female, with a cub nearby. I didn't want to kill the cub (it looked rather cute) so I took it home and cared for it. It lived with me until it grew up.

I tried to treat it as its mother would have, plenty of food and exercise and sometimes a wallop when it wanted its own way and disobeyed. It soon realized I was boss and obeyed me.

As it grew up, I got the idea of using it as a pack animal, made a pack saddle for it and used it. It was one of the best pack animals I ever had and a few clouts now and then kept it in order. It knew who was boss.

A few years later I was out hunting with Spot (he had a white patch on his chest) and came on several fresh grizzly tracks. Spot became quite excited, so I tied him to a tree and followed the tracks.

After about half a mile through the woods, I started into a small valley, turned a corner and there were four grizzlies ambling around.

I checked my rifle and opened fire. Only six shots and four dead grizzlies! I skinned them all and went to get Spot. Somehow he had pulled out of the rope collar and saddle and was in the woods a few yards away. I dropped the collar around his neck, but I suppose he smelled the blood on me and he put up a real struggle. But I had my club and after quite a battle, [I] showed him I was still boss.

Then I led him up to the skins and he didn't like that at all! He put up more of a fight than when I put the collar on him. I nearly wore out the club on him before he settled down.

Then I loaded the skins on him and we went back to my cabin. He didn't like being a pack horse for grizzly skins, but didn't fight too much.

I took the skins off and let him loose as usual. As he turned to leave, he reared up and I saw there was no white spot on his chest!

I had been using a wild grizzly for a pack horse!

[Michael Bruce; 1982]

The Menagerie of the Mind

64. THE SIDE-HILL GOUGER I

Keith Henderson: These two guys were going up—crawling up the side of a mountain, and there they saw a set of footprints. But they couldn't quite figure it out: how the hell could it be? Because the mountain was real steep, and this left foot was actually—it was about three feet higher up the mountain than what the right foot was. But the creatures evolved over time that way. Because the right leg actually grew about three feet longer than the left leg, you see. And that's about all I know about that.

65. THE SIDE-HILL GOUGER II

Gilbert Haines: The coyotes that work on the sidehill country have two legs shorter than the others so they can perch on the level around the hills.

66. REUDE'S COURSE IN ZOOLOGY

Reude Berry: Now there's two types of side-hills. There's the left-hand and the right-hand. They're a weird little animal. They never come down on the flats. The only way you can catch them is get them down on a piece of flat ground, because they can't run on flat ground. A left-hand side-hill gouger always moves around a hill—counterclockwise, because its left legs are shorter than its right legs. That's a left-hand gouger. The right-hand gouger has to go clockwise around the hill, because his right legs are shorter than the left. This is because of spending all of their lives on the hill. Now it's weird, it's real weird. You ought to see when a left-hand female meets up with a right-hand male—because their offspring are reeeeally something! They could have one long right front leg and one long left rear leg. Now these poor bastards—they don't know which way they're supposed to go around the mountain. So they usually find just the spot where they can stand comfortably, and their feet will be out [splayed] and they just stay there. And the others will bring food to them. There's not too many [of] those poor things. They [have] such a rough life, I think most of them are killed off. Same as the icegedunks.

They're almost extinct now. Icegedunks. They're weird-looking animals. They got a small head, something like a—I was going to say a deer, but no, it's more like a seal. Small ears, not big ears, you know, like a deer, so it would be more like a seal. And [they're] fairly heavy in the front quarters like a buffalo. Long slender body and a tail wheel. No hind legs. I don't know where the heck they stem from. But now, an animal with a wheel, now let's face it. What do they do when they get a flat? Well, you know, an old fellow told me he'd seen them pull into a service station to get their tire patched. And no money, but they would allow the attendant to cut a steak—depending on the size of the patch—off of a hind quarter. You know, off of the off-end of him. And hell, I've seen some of them stinking icegedunks running around with no ass at all.

Jackalopes are extinct. You can still find the odd fellow that's got one stuffed. A buddy of mine in Calgary got one stuffed. I haven't heard [if there are any in B.C.]. Somebody said that a long time ago there was. But I haven't heard. That's got to be way before my time. Because I haven't run across any myself. I've only seen them stuffed, so I can't tell you too much about them, you know. They look like a ruddy jackrabbit, except the ruddy thing's got a horn like an antelope, a two-pronged horn. They stick maybe five or six inches up out of their heads. They're the weirdest-looking damn things. You just don't expect a rabbit to have horns. No. What the hell, you throw your rifle up and you sight down on something like that, why it almost turns you to drink, really.

[They are] not overly [dangerous]. I guess a couple of guys have been gored by them. But let's face it. A jackrabbit, he'd go at full speed, he can't hurt you too much with a horn. He can kick you. I seen them break a dog's jaw kicking. But to run—no, I can't say they would be dangerous.

67. THE SKI-HOOFED MUSTANG

To survive, every creature has to adjust to its surroundings. Some animals grow warmer coats in winter, others hibernate, grouse grow little fringes along each toe to give more support in snow. The wild horses adjust also.

They were forced back into the mountains as more and more farmers took up the land. No more easy feeding and average winters; it was deep snow and eat what they could get.

As they had to walk in deep snow, they grew larger hooves. These did not grow sideways, which would have cut the inner part of the legs, but grew forwards. The mustangs also became a pacer type of horse.

In a few generations, the mustang's hooves were nearly a yard long and narrow. They slid easily over the deep snow, carrying the hungry horses to all available food.

If attacked by some hungry predator, the horses simply turned downhill and slid to safety, probably enjoying the trip while giving a horse laugh to the floundering pursuer.

Like deer's antlers, the ski hooves dropped off each spring and grew back in time for the winter snows.

In summer, they may be seen as ordinary horses. Living far back in the mountains in deep snow during the winter, few people have ever travelled far enough into the hills to see the ski-hoofed mustangs.

[Michael Bruce; 1982]

68. THE CORKSCREW OWL AND THE RUNAROUND

The reason why the tops of ponderosa pine trees are twisted is that they are the natural perch of the corkscrew owl. This bird sits on top of these trees on the lookout for prey. The peculiarity of these owls is that they can turn their heads completely around. Often at the base of these trees is a small creature called a runaround which spends its time running around the tree. The corkscrew owl twists its head around and around in order to keep track of the runaround, until it has screwed itself up so tight that the tree itself begins to twist.

69. THE BEAVERINE

Paddy Acland: That night the crew moved in and we made camp; and one unfortunate incident happened there. Somebody had shot a deer—mind you, there were no game laws up there. We had another Englishman who was greener than I was—and that's saying a good deal—and the rest of them were more or less old-timers and people that were more or less accustomed to the bush. Round the campfire in the evening the conversation turned on grizzly bears and so forth, and this Englishman asked the crowd if there were any grizzly bears up there. One man, who was an Irishman, thought he'd be funny and said, "You don't need to worry about the grizzly bears, what you've got to watch out for are the beaverine around here; they're terrible." And he [the Englishman] was sucker enough to say, "What's a beaverine?"

"Oh," he said, "you don't know what they are? Well, they're awful. They're bigger than a grizzly, and if they ever pick up a white man or even an Indian, you never see them again, they get rid of them so damn quick. So you've got to watch for them."

Well, unfortunately for the Irishman, he had a great liking for deer liver, and deer liver, when it is fresh, has a disasterous effect on a man's stomach. After a bit we went to bed, and about 1.30 in the morning a pack horse got loose and tangled up in one of the tent ropes. Instantly there was a shot through the roof of one of the tents. This was the Englishman who, unknown to other people, had a revolver in his pocket. He thought this was a beaverine after him, and he fired through the roof, and this woke up my Irish friend who immediately was overcome by the effects of this liver and he didn't dare move. He went through hell and high water until about half past four in the morning when he couldn't bear it anymore, and he had to work himself carefully backwards out under the fly of the tent and let go whatever it was he was trying to get rid of. I think if ever a biter got bit, it was this fellow.

70. OGOPOGO WEIGHED AND MEASURED

In 1873, the Goldbrick Railway Ltd. set out to design a series of feeder lines up and down the interior valleys. The crew of the day was assigned to the Lake Okanagan route.

Ahead of the detail party, a gang of scouts would blaze a trail along a plausible route, to be followed by the engineering crew with stakes, chains, and transits to record the position in mathematical detail.

This stretch along the lake was easy enough, but in this case it was even easier to leapfrog the advance party directly from one end of the lake to the other. The distance could be very closely estimated by recording the time taken to paddle the length of the lake. They used the same crew as before, and had fairly accurately converted their average speed to known measurements.

To determine the bearing between two points, the compass worked wonders, and besides, this could be verified by eye-balling the sky in the ever-sunny Okanagan, with concurrent reference to their trusty dust-proof CPR watch.

The difference in elevation was another matter. However, on a lake, the water is dead flat, and besides, it automatically corrects for curvature of the earth. Water finds its own level. Simply drive a sturdy stake at water line at each terminus, thereby carrying that elevation over the entire distance.

The follow-up party discovered that, from the earlier markers, either the stakes had been disturbed, or incorrectly set, or that lake was four feet lower at the south end! Their reputation at stake, the canoe crew did it again, in the opposite direction, and, sure enough, there *was* a discrepancy of four feet—this time, though, the lake appeared to be lower at the north end.

The solution at last came to light during the sixth check-run. A slimy beast swam alongside for a mile or so, then took off to the beach for a sunbath. Obviously, the level of the lake depended on whether Ogopogo was in, or out, of the lake.

Using Archimedes bathtub formula, the mass of the creature could be computed by dividing the area of the surface by the depth displaced. Must have been a couple of tons at least.

[D.M. Johnston; 1982]

The Mosquito

71. THE MOSQUITO GAUGE

The mosquitoes were especially thick at Bathurst Inlet. A lot of people rolled their own cigarettes up there and it was said that if you got only three mosquitoes under the gum of the cigarette paper after you licked it, it was going to be a light summer for mosquitoes.

72. LARGE MOSQUITOES I

Katherine Wood: There was a trapper at Fort Nelson. And he got up one morning and he found a mosquito trying on his socks. They say that when the American army first came into Whitehorse, they had planes coming through that they were refueling. They had five hundred gallons pumped into a mosquito before they found it wasn't a plane.

73. LARGE MOSQUITOES II

Michael Donoghue: They had a mosquito land there one day, and they had it greased and gassed up before they figured out it was a mosquito.

74. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS I

Ruby Erwin: I was out at Shuswap Lake and I was going to go down to go fishing. I left my car the other side, near the road, and there was a bush between. And the mosquitoes were so bad that I decided not to bother with the fishing. I turned around to go back, and [ran] right into a huge swarm of mosquitoes. And I could hear them singing all over the place, but there was one that was singing louder than the others. And that [noise grew] louder and louder, and I turned around and looked, and here was [a mosquito] following me. I started to run, and he kept coming faster and faster behind me, so I dodged behind a tree. In a minute I heard a thump and I turned around and looked. He'd run right into the tree, and his beak had gone right through the tree. So I just clamped it over and left him flapping there.

75. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS II

Cougar McLay: I was camped up one time up there in Athabasca. At the camp they were so big—I'm not kidding—you got in the tent, you figured you was safe. But they'd stick their stingers right through the tent. No kidding. And you'd take out a hammer (I figured that was safe) and you'd bend their stingers over. Like a bent nail, you'd bend their stingers over when they'd come. And I'll be a son-of-a-gun if they didn't fly away with the tent. Took the tent and everything. Couldn't get their stingers out.

76. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS III

Mary Pankoski: The mosquitoes all came along and [landed] on top of the canoe and just punched right down, they had such big beaks on them. So he picked up a rock and he cinched them all on the inside. And the damned mosquitoes took off with the canoe.

77. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS IV

Lou Newell: Our northern mosquitoes. Why they are so big that they grow hair on their bodies and bones in their wings. One day while on patrol, I was chased into a trapper's cabin by four of these brutes. I ran, slammed the door, but they came with such force that their drills went right though the four-inch slab door. I grabbed a hammer, bent the drills over, which was the wrong thing to do. Their weight pulled the door from its leather hinges. The war really started then. I had to beat those others off in this [cabin] all night.

78. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS V

Ernie Streifel: I guess that's about the year of the flood. The thing that really worries me with the weather the way it's been, this heat and the high water and the swamps all around, we might be just how it was back in '48. (When there was water all around) the mosquitoes grew so darn fast that everywhere you went there were these darn mosquitoes. I remember one day when I was working out in the field there, and I saw these darn mosquitoes coming down. So I jumped behind a bulldozer blade and clinched their beaks over with a hammer, as they all hit the bulldozer.

79. VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES

Ernie Streifel: My dad used to sit in the house. There were so darn many mosquitoes, he didn't like to go outside. And he'd sit there, and my mom [there's] a little bit of the German in her, you know—and she used to say, "Pa, you sit there all day long and you look the vindow out. Why don't you go outside there and throw the cow over the fence some hay?" My dad wouldn't go out on account of all the mosquitoes. We could see them coming down there this one day and they swarmed down on a cow. And in no time at all they're sitting up on the fence ringing the [cow] bell for the calf. It was like that all year, you know, and that's what I'm afraid of with this weather the way it's been.

80. MORE VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES I

Geoffrey Ellis: I can tell you a true story about mosquitoes. This time I was stationed in Vernon, B.C. [On] the 24th of May I was sent to Falkland, which is just a few miles—twenty-odd miles—from Vernon, because that's when they had the Falkland Rodeo. Things were pretty wild around there, so I was sent up there, and my wife and small child came with me. We stayed for the day at the home of the local justice of the peace. I made a patrol around and made sure there weren't *too* many stabbings going on. Broke up a few fights and things. But the mosquitoes were so bad that I've never, ever before or since, seen anything like it. And the house had double screen doors—the mosquitoes were so bad on the outside of those screen doors that you actually could *not* see through the screen. So you can imagine what it was like outside. We stayed there the night and this was at dusk in the evening. In the daytime it was quite hot and they'd all disappear, but those were true mosquitoes.

Of course, mind you there are some fantastically big mosquitoes up north. They'd fly down out of a tree, light on your arm and bite off a piece and fly back up in the tree and eat it. [A] chap was ploughing in the spring when the mosquitoes were bad. And so he left his team, unharnessed them from the plough and put them under a tree to feed them while he went back to the house to have his lunch. When he came back, his team had disappeared, but the harness was there. And there were six of the biggest mosquitoes he'd ever seen in his life tossing to see who was going to get the harness.

81. MORE VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES II

Lou Newell: My wife was bitten out here and she said that they were just mites compared to those in the north. This brought back many memories of the large hairy and bony ones I had encountered on patrols. We had a team of horses and their harnesses [were] missing from the barn. My grandfather and I started looking for them. We looked everywhere, but to no avail. Then we heard the clanking of the iron over the small rise. We raced up to the top and on the other side were two mosquitoes. They had eaten the horses and were now playing horse shoes to see who would get the harness.

82. VORACIOUS BUT CONSIDERATE

Yes, about ten years ago I was camping up at French Creek north of Parksville. And there's about six mosquitoes up there that got so much of my blood that I get a Father's Day card [from them] every year.

83. TROUBLE WITH LOCUSTS

LOU NEWELL: You remember the old sailing days and that? [That] great day in New York harbour in 1976 reminded me of some of the times when I was a young boy back in the 1800s. Now those were the days of sails. And they sailed for six days and on the seventh day you holystoned the decks and you scraped the tables. It was about this time of the year when we found ourselves in the Red Sea, just southeast of Jidda, Saudi Arabia, with every sail set trying to gather some of the breeze. That sun was burning down on us without mercy. We were trying to return to England, but our progress was so slow. One afternoon we saw the menacing dark clouds coming off the land to the north. The roar was deafening. We were ordered to drop sail, but before we could, a hoard of locusts carried by the wind was upon us. I never before and never after saw such a scene. When they had passed, they had taken every sail of every one of our forty ships. So there we were in this darned Red Sea with no sail. Our task was made for us. We had to get sails, so we rowed those ships to the closest shore—near Aden. We failed to get any canvas there, so we picked fig leaves all day and sewed them together for sails, and we made it back to merry old England. Now eight months later, we were located off the Spanish Sahara when a dark cloud was observed over the mainland. The locusts. They were there again. And they found us. This time they didn't attack us, but we could recongnize them as being the same ones, or their descendants, that attacked us near Aden as they were all wearing canvas jackets.

THE HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED

This book will not answer the question of which group is more mendacious, the hunters or the sports fishermen. Although the hunters seem to have an upper hand in this collection, this merely reflects the biased nature of my collecting: I ran into more hunters than fisherman in my travels. Whatever the answer is to the question, the field and stream have long been places of great exaggeration. The reason is obvious: in no other activities do flora, fauna, landscape, and sport mix so completely. To hunt or fish is to confront nature on the most primeval level, and if nature cannot be defeated in fact, then it can in fancy.

Here we have the expected stories of remarkable hunting feats and expeditions: ingenious ways of catching game, great numbers of animals and fish caught (often with one bullet), remarkable guns and ammunition, and the luck of the hunter. In the second section of this chapter the animals take revenge. Here the animals match the hunters in intelligence or unwittingly make the hunter appear foolish. In the final section, it is man who is the game and the animal who is the stalker; in these stories, a man's intelligence (or luck) usually pulls him through. The last tale may not fit this section exactly, but the idea that a moose can become a man-trap seems to conform to its spirit.

With Gun and Rod . . . .

84. HUNTING RABBITS ON SALTSPRING ISLAND

DONALD SEYMOUR: My uncle, a man of six-foot seven, used to tell some pretty wild stories. The story that impressed me was how they were so poor on Saltspring Island that they'd go out and cut the end off a log and then paint it black on the end. Then they'd go out and chase the rabbits around, and [when] the rabbits became desperate, and thinking the [the log end] was a hole, they would run into the end of a log and knock themselves out.

85. MURPHY THE BEAR-HUNTER

Thomas Loveder: This Irishman lived way up in the Rockies there, and he had quite a reputation as a hunter. Three tourists came to the city and they were very anxious to get some bear rugs, you see. And they wanted to know where they could get a bear, too. So one of the residents says, "Well, Murphy up there in the mountains, he'll get you a bear any time." Of course, they felt rather skeptical about it. They finally hiked it on out—quite a long hike to get to his cabin, [and] when they arrived, he invited them in. And they explained what they wanted. "Oh," he says, "don't worry about it. I'll get you a bear. Now you wait here in the the cabin, I'll be back in a few minutes." So he went out the door, and one of the fellows says, "Not a gun or anything?"

About ten minutes later, one happened to look out. Here was the Irishman coming down the mountain at full speed with a big black bear behind him. And he says, "Open the door! Open the door!" So when they opened the door in comes the Irishman, and the bear comes crashing in and knocks itself out. So the Irishman says, "Well now, you skin that one, and I'll be back again in another ten minutes with another bear for you."

86. THE HUNTER'S ROUGH DAY

Alfred Ferguson: He said he was by the lakes up here in the highlands, you know, around [the] Malahat, way up in there. "There was a bunch of geese going down this lake," he said. He didn't have a gun. He didn't have anything. But he had a piece of rope with him. So he says, "Well, I'll get those geese." He made a noose, and he swam in this lake underwater until he saw their feet and put this rope around their feet and pulled it tight. He got them all. [Then] he said, "They took off. Here I was hanging on the rope and here they took me right up in the air. I was way up over the Malahat, there, and I was getting awful tired. Couldn't hang on. And finally I got low enough and thought, well, I'll let myself go and let them fly away. I can't catch them." So he dropped and he dropped into a big hollow stump. "I couldn't get out," he says, "too [high] to get out, and down below me was a couple of bear cubs. And by the way they were nuzzling around me, I knew their mother was going to come in pretty soon.

"You know," he said, "a bear always comes down a tree backwards. When she come over the top of the stump and started to back down, and just as she got down there, I grabbed her by the tail and jabbed her in the behind with my jacknife and she pulled me up over the stump. And that's the way I got out."

87. THE SHOOTING GALLERY

Geoffrey Ellis: I was in the British Columbia Provincial Police. I joined in June 1931, and in '32 I was stationed in Powell River. While there I was sent up to a village, whose name I'd rather not mention, some distance north of there to assist the constable in charge, who was bogged down with a lot of paperwork, as most of us were in those days. And there was no meat. The meat used to come to this particular place, and a lot of communities up there, by Union steamship, which had no freezing capacity. So that sometimes, if the boat was late, the meat was high when it got there. And if it was very late, well, it just had to be thrown away. You couldn't do anything with it. And that's what happened on this particular occasion, apparently. So the constable in charge suggested, "Why don't you go and get us a deer? South of town a couple of miles there's lots of them around there." So I said, "That's fine, but what am I going to shoot it with? I've only got my service revolver." "Oh," he said, "there's a rifle here in the detachment office; it's an old .45-.70 Winchester. There's a bunch of black-powder cartridges. It was seized from some Indian about twenty years ago, but it's been sitting here ever since. See how it works."

So I took it along. I got south of town and found a logging trail, and after I'd gone up about half a mile, there was a tremendous spruce tree laying across the logging trail. And back of the spruce there's a deer's head with a beautiful set of antlers. I thought, "That's the one I want." So I had already got a shell in the breech of the rifle. So I cocked it—I was only, oh, 25 or 30 yards from it—and I fired. [It went off with] a tremendous boom and a cloud of black smoke and a lot of sparks flying. After it cleared away there, the deer was still standing there. So I cranked another shell into the breech and I walked about six feet closer. I said, "Well, I can't miss this time." So anyway, boom! I tried again. And after the smoke and sparks cleared away, there was the deer still standing there. Well, I only had three shells left in the thing. So I fired all three of them, and [after] the third one it disappeared.

"Well," I thought, "by golly, I've got it this time." So I went over and there on the other side of the windfall were five dead deer. All shot clean through the head. It was a bit of a problem getting them back to the village. However, after a lot of fussing we finally got them back. And that took care of *our* meat supply; and it took care of the meat supply for the rest of the village until the ship came back again. But I have great difficulty getting anybody to believe this story.

88. ONE SHOT I

Lou Newell: One day I was returning empty-handed from a hunt. It was along towards evening when all of a sudden, on the right, a big moose charged. Up with the rifle to fire, when a massive grizzly bear came at me from the left. Having a moment to decide which to shoot, as I had only time to get one shot off, I spied a sharp rock that was straight in front of me. I turned and fired at the rock jutting out from the canyon wall. The bullet split, killing both the bear and the moose. However, I held the gun wrong and the reaction threw me backward, and my suspenders caught on an overhanging branch. The buttons on my trousers gave way and I fell into a stream. I came up with all my pockets and hands full of fish. The buttons flew up in the air killing six ducks that were flying overhead. It turned out not too bad a day after all. Somehow I got a sore shoulder. Must have been caused when I carried home the spoils of my hunt in one load.

89. ONE SHOT II

Reude Berry: Actually you could call [this] a tall tale. Nobody believes it, but that's beside the point. It happened quite a few years ago, way back when I was just a pup going to school. [During] the weekends and holidays, I used to be shipped off to the granddad's farm. So fall of the year, September, and I'm all bundled up and shipped out to the farm. When I get out there they're busy haying. They can't be bothered with kids, so Gramp says, "You go on up to the house and any rifle you can find shells for you can use to go hunting. Oh, hold it, hold it," he says, "don't use the .25-.35, because Lloyd wants to go out. There's no shells for the .30-.30, and I don't remember where I put the shells for the .22 high-power Savage. But there's shells up there. Anything you can bother to find shells for you can use." Well I'm a hunter. I been a hunter damn near from the day I was born, really. And I'm in Seventh Heaven. I whistled up to the house and the only one I could find shells for, and I found two shells, it was an old Snyder. I can give you the old-timer's description of a .577 Snyder: it's 16-foot long from barrel to butt, and it's got an effective killing range of twice its own length. Naturally that's underestimating the rifle.

I think they were used during the Boer War. The Snyder. You cocked them and then—after you've fired, you have to cock it, roll the block over and hit the extractor. Put the shell in, roll the block, fire. Cock it, roll the block, hit the extractor. Anyway, I've only got two shells, so I'm not too concerned about that. So I grab the Snyder and I started dragging it towards the door. And my grandmother keyholed me, "Where are you going?" "Gramps said I could go out hunting." "Well," she said, "you can go hunting all right, but you're not going hunting in those clothes. Come on upstairs." Mom hadn't packed any clothes like for knocking about, or bush clothes, so Grammy dug around until she got a pair of Gramp's pants. Well, they were about a foot and a half too long for me, so she rolled them up and tied them around the ankles. And they were big in the waist, so she gave me a pair of braces. And an old shirt. "Okay, away you go." A pair of sneakers somebody had there that were close enough [in size] with an extra pair of socks in them. So I took off.

This was up in the McLeese Lake area. I took off and headed up in back of the property about a mile and a half in. There's Sheridan Creek that [today] doesn't have as much water in it, but in those days it used to run fairly full. [It] would have a pothole and a little rapid and another pothole and fairly steep banks. Anyway, when I got to the creek I happened to get right in between these two stinking holes. There was a little bit of a ford going across. So I was down one side and across and just about to the top—and a little winded because I'm dragging this ruddy old Snyder, which was about three times the size of me.

Hold it! There's a big old bull moose standing there, couldn't have been more than ten or fifteen yards. When I looked it seemed closer than that, but thinking back and knowing the area—I know it had to be at least fifteen yards. Well, I pulled the old Snyder up and whipped the hammer back, got it up against my arm or up against my stomach or wherever and I fired. Oh, man! I never got kicked so hard in my life. That thing whistled me right over in a somersault, but I could see I hit the bull. You know, that bullet hit that stinking bull right where his horn entered his head. And it split in half. Half of it went up in the air and it cut the head off a grouse sitting in a tree. And the other half, it killed the moose.

That gun kicked and catapulted me in a somersault backwards and I landed in the deep hole of the pool. And I finally pulled myself and the old Snyder up out of that creek, my pants were so full of trout, the top button flew off my fly and killed a rabbit. Now I've heard of guys that's gotten more game on a trip, but I really don't know any anybody that's gotten more out of one shot. I've got two deer with one shot and I did shoot two moose with one shot since then, but really that was the best I ever had with one shot.

90. BEADS OF SWEAT

Ray Logie: An old fellow was up on his trap lines in the Yukon, and boy it was cold; it was really cold. You could use a lot of metaphors for how cold it was. You know, your breath froze and you had to break it off. [This] was in the old days, and he only had an old blunderbuss, and they used powder and shot. [It was] just for protection, because he had his trap lines and he was out checking his trap lines. It was terrifically cold—and in the snow and ice he came around, and here was this grizzly bear. It was looking mean and it was up on its [hind] legs, which means trouble. As soon as he saw it, he immediately thought of protection. He had no shot. He had powder left, but he had no shot left. This bear was the most frightening thing he'd ever seen. He was never more frightened in his life than when he saw that bear. He begins to get beads of sweat on his forehead. Of course in a minute the sweat froze into little round iceballs. He was thinking fast. He wiped his forehead and the iceballs, and he put them in his gun—he had powder in the gun—and he raised the gun, aimed right at the bear's head and let loose a charge. And that gun went off, but in a minute the heat of the powder exploding melted the little iceballs and water came out of the gun. But [when] the water got out of the gun, hit the cold air, it froze into an icicle. The icicle went straight for the bear's head and hit the bear right between the eyes. But as soon as the icicle hit the warm flesh of the bear, it melted; then the bear died of water on the brain.

91. THE LONG SHOT

Reude Berry: Talking about guns. One of my neighbors had an old .43 Mauser, an 11 millimetre. It was used by the Germans in the First World War. You could literally kill a man at a mile without thinking about it. And our neigbor had one—this Ken Ayles. Ken and I were down at one end of this seeded area, which goes on to seven or eight or nine miles before an area there that hadn't been seeded. And Ken spotted this old cow moose. Well, I shouldn't say old; she was pretty skookum fat. [He] threw his rifle up and fired at it, and she didn't go down. So he never thought too much of it. Figured, you know, "What the hell, I missed." But the following Friday we were up at the [other] end of this fresh-seeded area and, great god, we saw the scrawniest looking old cow moose just barely moving. I mean poorly! She looked as if she hadn't eaten a good meal in months. Ken said he thought there was something familiar looking about her. [And] about 25 or 30 yards behind her, bouncing from tree to tree, was this little hunk of lead, about the size of a .22 shell. Man, I'm telling you, those old .43s had staypower.

Taft: That's another true story, is it?

Reude Berry: Well, what the hell, I was there.

92. THE HIGH SHOT

Cougar McLay: I was hunting up in Findlay Creek one time—Findlay Creek sloughs, just off Columbia Lake. I borrowed a friend's gun—his name was 'Rosco' Roscelli. He said his gun had a heck of a range on it. It was a shotgun. It was an old gun; it had tape around the barrel and the stock. It was something like what the Indians used to [say about] a .51 Sharps: "Shoot today and kill tomorrow." That's how far it could shoot, but I didn't believe him. [Then] these two birds come over, and they looked like flies. That's how high they were. They were mallards. So I led them about 20 yards, [and] pulled the trigger. I took out the tobacco from the tobacco pouch and I rolled a cigarette and had it half-smoked before those birds hit the ground.

93. THE CURVED SHOT

Alfred Ferguson: One time he was being chased by a wolf, and he got into where there was a haystack. He was running around [the haystack] and the wolf was always just on the other side of it. And he'd stop and turn around and then the wolf would go the other way. He chased him until finally he thought, "Well, I got to kill this wolf somehow or other or he'll get me." So he said, "I stopped and bent my rifle barrel over my knee. I think that's just about the right curve, and I shot. [Then] I walked around to the other side and there the wolf was, dead."

94. HUNTING CROCODILE

Drew Brayshaw: Okay, how to catch a crocodile. [This is] how the crocodile-hunters catch them for the zoos and things. What they need is a deck chair, a very boring book, a telescope, a pair of tweezers and a matchbox. And what you do is put the boring book on the deck chair. And [when] the alligator or crocodile comes along, he sits down, starts reading and goes [to] sleep. And then you pick up the telescope and look through the large end so he looks very, very small, and then you pick him up with the tweezers and you put him in the matchbox.

The Tables Turned

95. THE TRAIL GROWS COLD

Mark Mealing: This concerns an uncle, old uncle, so old his name's, I'm afraid, forgotten. He lived up in the Yukon in the days when the Yukon was much better known than it is now. Now he lived up *north* in the Yukon. It wasn't the southern Yukon, like Whitehorse or Dawson City or those places. This was way beyond the Ogilvie Range. One hears a lot about how cold it gets in the north, and easterners think they know something about cold, and westerners don't know anything about cold. Neither of those two could appreciate what it's really like in the north. It's terribly cold.

Uncle did pretty well. He had a little, tiny little cabin up in the mountains, and he brought out good-sized nuggets every year, [then] go back in the mountains for another year. He had a big dog and a little sleigh, and he had his gun. One winter, and it was a cold winter, he decided that he needed some elk meat. Larder was running low. He wanted good meat for the rest of the winter. So he wrapped the gun with a bit of fur so it wouldn't feeze up on him, stowed that on the sleigh, harnessed up the dog, and out he went.

Pretty soon, on the other side of a big glade, he sees a nice one. He quiets down the dog, but gets it moving forward and starts to come up on it [the elk], because there's brush in his way and he can't see it for a clear shot. Comes around the brush and just about ready to get set up, and the old elk turns around and sees him, and it starts to lope off. So he quickly unwraps his rifle and urges the dog on. The snow's pretty deep and the elk starts going through the forest. The dog has trouble pulling the sleigh through the powder. But then he notices a curious thing: it's so cold that every puff of breath the elk [exhales] flows out of his nostrils, around past him and freezes solid. So there's these two runners of ice about three or four feet off the ground, perfectly smooth there behind the elk. Old uncle, he's pretty smart. He knows what to do. So he manoeuvres around and up the slope where the breath starts, and then he's got the sleigh running beautifully on those two runners. And the dog down below—no resistance at all—the dog starts to overhaul the elk. Comes up behind him and uncle gets down, braces his elbows on the handles of the sleigh, gets the gun, is sighting it in on the elk, and damn it, that elk turns around and figures out what he's doing. And it takes three great jumps and it holds its breath. And of course when it holds its breath, those runners stop, and poor old uncle; his sleigh falls off the end of the runners and nose first into the snow. The dog stops. Uncle falls over the whole thing, breaks his arm, and never did get an elk that winter.

96. PLAYING LEAPBEAR

Hubert Hall: Carnes Creek comes into the Columbia River, and we were surveying Minnow Plains way up Carnes Creek. I had three men with me. And I had the instruments set up just below a great big boulder. A great big rock. And the boys were ahead cutting a line, [when] I heard a rather peculiar noise around the rock, so I left the instruments and just went around to the side of the rock and here was a grizzly. He looked at me. I looked at him, and I saw he was going to jump. So as he jumped, I went forward, and he landed over 14 feet behind me. He looked at me again; I looked at him. He [made] another leap. I did the same thing. We kept this up for about half an hour. He got tired and beat it off into the bush.

The next morning after breakfast we went to work at the same place. Well, you'll hardly believe this, you know, but the boys went up cutting line, and I was at the instruments, shouting to them all. I heard another peculiar noise around this rock. I went around, and here's this old bear practising short jumps.

97. WHALE'S MILK I

Bill Law: There was this fellow known as "By-God Stafford". He lived up at Read Island. One time I went in there and he was feeding milk to two or three pigs in a trough that he had dug out of a log. I asked him where he had got the milk and he said it was whale's milk. He said, "One morning I was wakened here early in the morning," he says, "and bellowing was going on and splashing water on the beach and echoing on the hills. I got up and looked out the window and there was a whale backing water out there in the bay, by-god, you know that? Do you know what was the matter with her, by-god, Billy? She'd lost a young one and had too much milk. So I rowed out there in a canoe and milked her, by-god, you know, and I filled the canoe right full and I had to go ashore and get the 18-foot row boat, by-god. They give a lot of milk, one of those whales, you know." He says, "She came every morning to be milked—dawn. I had milk all over the bay and drifting out into the channel and I thought it was such a waste I would get some pigs and raise some pigs. So I got me three or four pigs. I'm trying that, feeding them whale milk."

It was a lot of bologna. I saw him at Campbell River later, and I asked him how the pig farm was coming along. He said, "Not very good, by-god, you know, I'm not gaining a bit. There's a bear that comes and steals the little pigs, by-god, you know." I said, "Why don't you shoot the bear?" "He's the smartest bear in British Columbia, by-god, you can't shoot him or trap him." "Well," I said, "I guess the only thing to do is put some lanterns in the piggery." He said, "I've tried that too, by-god. He never used to come around, he never shows up unless I go to get my provisions, see. I laid for him with a rifle but he don't come around. He knows when I'm home. It's when I go away when he steals the pigs. I tried the lanterns in there and I thought I had him beat. By-god," he says, "it was all right for two or three weeks. Then one morning I heard a hell of a racket out there and squealing and grunting, you know. I grabbed the old .30-.30 and ran outside there and there was that bear going up the side of the mountain with a pig under one arm and the lantern in the other. He must have heard me pull the hammer back because he blew the light out and I missed him, by-god."

98. WHALE'S MILK II

BILL LAW: By-God Stafford said he had all this milk from this whale [who'd lost her calf], you see. I went in there and asked him if the whale had gone dry. "No," he says, "she still gives four or five canoefuls a day. I have a little trouble milking her. She doesn't understand. She doesn't roll far enough upon her side for me to milk her, [but] she got to know me after a while," he says, "milk every morning at dawn. And so I got the oar and I used to rub it underneath her belly. She rolled right up. So I could milk her—really milk her dry then, you see," he said. "So I was milking her—wasting all the milk. There was milk all over the bay and milk running down the channel on the flood and back up again. So I decided to get me a few little pigs. Feed them up and fatten them up and sell them to the logging camps, you see."

Next time I saw him, I said, "How's the pig ranch, George?" "Not very good, by-god." "Whale left, eh?" "By-god, she's here every morning at dawn." "Run dry, eh?" "By-god, she don't run dry. That's—by-god, that just tells me how much you know about whales. A whale won't run dry for a couple of years. It gives a tremendous amount of milk, by-god, for the young. And the older the young gets, the more milk it takes to feed him. Keep him swimming. It takes two barrels a day now," he says. "No, she won't go dry."

I saw him at Campbell River getting his provisions. So I said, "How's the pig ranch, George?" "No good, by-god." "Whale went dry, eh? You didn't think it would." "No, it didn't go dry. Giving lots of milk." He said, "A bear smelled the pigs. He comes in to steal the little ones." "Well," I said, "why don't you shoot him?" "By-god," he said, "you can't shoot him. He's too smart. He doesn't come around unless I'm away getting my provisions in here sometimes. He never comes around when I'm home." "Well, trap him," I says. "You can't trap him. He's a smart bear, that one, by-god. You can't trap him." "Well, I think I know," I says, "animals are afraid of fire. Now get half a dozen of these old barn lanterns, hang them up in the piggery and he won't come in. Scared of the fire and the light." "Don't think I didn't try that, by-god, I did," he says. "About two months, he never came around at all. By-god, I figured I had him beat. Then one morning about two or three in the morning, I heard this squealing down in the pigpen and a grunting and snorting. So I grabbed the .30-.30 rifle. Ran down there in my underwear, and by-god," he says, "I just got there in time to see that bastard going up the side of the hill with a pig under one arm and a goddamn lantern under the other. Missed him. He blew the light out and I missed him."

99. WHALES MATING

Bill Law: . . . Mrs. Bull, at the hotel—the first Mrs. Bull, she was quite one of the boys, you see. She'd come in the barroom and talk and everything. And she was on the old *Cassiar* going down to Vancouver; in Malaspina Straits they saw a couple of whales. So Mrs. Bull asked George [Stafford] if he knew how the whales mate.

"By-god, yes," he said, "I know."

She said, "I wish you would tell me. Would you tell me how they mate?"

"By-god, I can do that," he said.

"Well," she said, "how do they mate?"

"Well, they cohabit, just like an animal, by-god, and they have young ones."

"I know that. But how do they go about this?"

Well, George didn't want to tell her but he didn't want to show his ignorance either, you see.

He said, "They go about it like an animal."

"But, how does the male find the female in this vast expanse of water? Do you know that?"

"Yeah. By-god, I know that too."

"Well, how do they?"

"Well, by-god, the female comes in heat and the same as an animal, by-god, and when she's feeding she zig-zags through the water, understand, by-god. And the male comes along and he smells this, by-god, so he starts to zig-zag too, until he gets an idea of what course she's on. Then he straightens out and he starts after her, by-god, he speeds up too, by-god, you know. And he sees her after a while and he's paddling for all he can, by-god, and she starts to speed up too, not that she wants to get away, by-god, but she wants to tease him, you understand, by-god. He speeds up and she knows it's all up for her, by-god; even if she does try to run away, she can't, because he's too fast, by-god, and when she sees it's all up, she stops and backs water and he slips her 18 feet at 80 miles an hour, by-god."

Mrs. Bull went in and slammed the door.

100. BY-GOD STAFFORD TELLS A LIE

I read in the *Elder Statesman* where you want to hear from liars and tellers of tall tales. Well, I may stretch the truth a bit once in a while, but I'm no liar. I just want to set you straight on that story about By-God Stafford. Him and me was friends off and on for years and By-God was no liar.

In them days I was cook in a logging camp up north of Campbell River, and when By-God was out hunting up that way he would drop into camp of an evening for a good meal and a jug of my special brew and tell a few yarns. So if he'd been a liar, I'd have known it for sure.

Only time I known him to stray from the truth was that story about the whale he milked to feed his pigs. He showed me the prints the pig-stealing bear made, and By-God knew as well as me they weren't no bear tracks. Over two foot long and six inches deep, they were. Hairy sasquatch footprints, that's what they were. But By-God knew folks would call him a liar or crazy if he told that, so he just said it was a bear as stole his pigs.

Now that last pig he told about was a fine young sow, raised on whale milk, and weighed around 1200 pounds. She'd just farrowed a litter of 12 healthy piglets when she got stole. By-God, he'd got plumb discouraged trying to raise pigs and getting them all stole, so he gives them to me. I was off work for the fire season. Had me an old log cabin on the beach. Got some laying hens and a nanny goat and set out to raise them piglets.

Well, I tried feeding them goat's milk, eggs, kitchen slops, cows' milk, everything. But they just sniffed at the stuff, turned their little snouts up and looked at me sad like. Well, it didn't bother me none when the loggers said my cooking wasn't fit for pigs, they should know! But it sure hurt when them little pigs turned their noses up at my grub.

Anyways, there they were, just wasting away, getting scrawnier and punier by the hour and nothing I could do about it. Came the day I figured I'd best put them out of their misery. They were just laying all sprawled out on the beach, too listless to even walk around. Then [all] of a sudden their ears all perked up and they started grunting and squealing like crazy, and they up and took off along the beach so fast their little tails stood straight out behind them. And there off shore was old mama whale a-spouting and a-blowing up a storm. Last I seen of them little pigs they was swimming out to sea, all strung out behind her.

When I told him about it, By-God said that figured. Them being second generation whale-milk fed piglets, they'd take naturally to such a whale of a mother.

Mind, I did hear tell later on about a pod of pink whales being sighted up around the Queen Charlottes, and up as far as Ocean Falls.

And if you think I'm lying about the Hairy Sasquatch just ask any old Indian born and raised around Comox. Just you ask them about the Forbidden Plateau, and the hairy giants that drove their ancestors off the cliffs. They'll tell you.

[Elizabeth L. Kelly; 1982]

101. A STRANGE ALLIANCE I

Hubert Hall: I'll tell you a perfectly true wolf story that happened to me. I was coming down the ice on the Columbia River in the winter. And behind me were about four wolves. They were quite a distance away, but they seemed to be following me. I got more scared every minute. I started to beat it hard. I was on snowshoes, you know. They kept coming closer and closer; at last they were right close to me. So I kicked the snowshoes off and drew myself up into a tree—a tree about eight or ten inches through. I was up there three or four hours with these wolves around there yelping and howling. So after about three or four hours, two of the wolves went away. I said, "Oh well, this looks better. Won't be very long before the other two go away." I waited a couple of hours or so, and here were these two wolves coming back bringing a beaver with them.

102. A STRANGE ALLIANCE II

Lou Newell: This came from a minister. He was remembering the time when, as a young minister in northern Alberta's Peace River country, [as] he was travelling between his parishes, he happened to see a large grizzly barrelling down a hill on him like a locomotive. He hit a tree climbing. Now that [bear] was right put out by his climbing up that spruce He stood on his hind legs, grabbed the tree, and shook it like the dickens. When he saw he wasn't going to shake the preacher out, he gave Bob a dirty look and disappeared in the birch thickets. As soon as he'd gone, Bob started down. He just about hit the dirt when here came that darned bear with a partner. Bob wasn't particularly timid, but he shinnied right back up that tree. The grizzlies took turns shaking it, and then they shook it together. But he hung on just squeezing the juices right out of that tree. Finally the bears gave up and started off towards the river. Bob figured they were whipped, and after waiting a good long time, he made up his mind it was safe to come down again. Bob took one last look around, and there they were. The bears, leading a beaver by the hands, coming back.

103. GRACE

Michael Donoghue: An old Indian friend and myself were up the coast on a hunting trip. Anyways, we were walking down this narrow trail and all of the sudden this large grizzly comes out in front of us. Rears up on its hind legs and growls. My Indian friend quickly says to me, "Lie down on the ground and pretend you're dead. That way the bear won't eat you. They only eat what they kill themselves." So I did. I lay down on the ground, my Indian friend beside me. And the bear come walking over to us and started batting us around on the ground there, back and forth, back and forth. This went on for a little while. Finally I looked at my Indian friend and I says, "What do we do now?" He says, "We'll pray that the bear's a Christian." So I did. You know, I wasn't going to argue with him at that point. So I prayed like I never prayed before. All of the sudden, lo and behold, this old bear, he backs off from us, and down on his knees on his hind legs. Puts its two front paws together and bows its head and says, "O God, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful."

Great Escapes

104. ONE WAY TO ESCAPE A COUGAR

ERNIE HAGGSTROM: He told about him and this [black man]—he was a diamond driller. He was surface drilling and they drilled all day and it was starting to get dark. They packed up and started home, and here this big cougar started following them. They didn't know what to do. Every time they looked at the cougar, he stopped; when they started walking, the cougar would start following them. So they start talking it over and they decided, "Well whenever we looked at him, the cougar stopped and when we walk, he follows us. So he's liable to jump us from behind." They had their safety belts on that miners always wear, whether they're working surface or below ground. One took his belt off and put it in the other guy's belt, and turned around and fastened up, so they had one walk backwards and one walk forwards. And that way they could always see where they were going. And every few steps, they turned around. Of course, when they walked there was a white guy and then they walked ten steps and there was a black guy. Finally the poor cougar stood there and shook his head and give up in disgust and walked away. He couldn't tell which kind he was going to tackle.

105. ANOTHER WAY

ALFRED FERGUSON: [My uncle, Frank Verdier] was going along the trail and he met this [cougar]. He didn't have anything on him that he could protect himself with. He just waited, and he waited until this cougar charged. And he said, "When he opened his mouth to grab me, I put my hand down his throat, [and] grabbed him by the tail, and pulled him inside-out. And he ran the other way."

106. THE VORACIOUS WOLVES OF BURNS LAKE

JOHN GIBSON: There were two chaps out with a bobsleigh and a team of horses. They were out toward Babine Lake to pick up a moose they had shot. They loaded it on the back of the sleigh, and as they were coming back towards Burns Lake a pack of some 30 wolves decided to pursue them. They whipped up the team and started going a little faster, [but] the wolves were gaining on them. So they thought they would sacrifice the moose, and they threw that off. And the wolves ate up the moose. Then they took up the chase again, and they got closer and closer. The [men] had some rough going and one of the partners was thrown off and promptly eaten by the wolves. [But] they kept right on chasing, then finally the sleigh upset, so he grabbed his rifle and took off. The wolves ate up the team of horses, and again took up the chase. He was running towards Burns Lake, and began to fire at the wolves. He killed 29 of the 30 wolves that were pursuing him, [then] he ran out of ammunition. He was completely exhausted and barely making it; finally the wolf came up and he could feel his hot breath, getting closer and closer. He knew he had had it, [and] he fell down in the snow and the wolf fell down dead behind him, having eaten one moose, one person, two horses, and 29 other wolves.

107. HIDING FROM A GRIZZLY

Hubert Hall: The first case is up in the Big Bend of the Columbia River. I was doing some surveying there. Then one Sunday we weren't working, so I went out with my rifle after grizzly. I got a very fine specimen, and I skinned her, rolled it up and had it on my back in my pack straps. The trail back to my camp, for about a mile, was a narrow ledge of rock with a fall of about two or three hundred feet into the creek in the canyon. I was coming along this very narrow trail, where I couldn't back up, and coming towards me was another grizzly. You'd hardly believe it, but he was coming quite rapidly. I'd used my last shell in the rifle. I didn't know what to do, [until] a very happy thought struck me: I put the rifle down on one side, took the bear skin, and wrapped it completely around myself. He came up to me and I came up to him. He smelled me all over and growled and I smelled him all over and growled. And we passed on.

108. THE BEAR HUG I

Donald Seymour: This one happened to me. You know there's a lot of blueberries up the mountain, and I was up there climbing over a log, and there was a bear on the other side. I fell right into the bear's arms, and I was pinned. So anyhow the bear had a hold of me in a bear hug, believe it or not, and I didn't know what to do. My hands were down like this, you know [pinned to his sides], so I started to tickle the bear. The bear got real excited and let me go. So anyhow, I was running down the hill and I looked back to see what the bear was doing. The bear was up there [motioning with arm] wanting me to come back.

109. THE BEAR HUG II

Mark Mealing: The Indian hunter is travelling through the bush. And it's early autumn; the bears haven't quite gone to bed yet. And he's not paying as much attention as he should to the landscape around him. He walks around a tree, straight into a very large bear that happens for some reason known to itself to be standing up at the time. The bear flings its forepaws around him and hugs the hunter to him, and the hunter, pinioned as he is, can only reach one hand down. And he reaches it down between the bear's legs and begins to caress the bear intimately. And the bear says, "Uh!" and steps back and flings its forepaws up into the air. And the hunter starts to back away, and the bear lunges forward and grabs him again. And the hunter again caresses the bear. This is repeated until the bear finally collapses backward, spent. And the hunter walks backwards, away from the bear, out of the clearing, and turns away. And at the last moment, as he's preparing to run, he looks behind him, and there's the bear still sitting, but now it's looking straight at him. It's not moving, except one forepaw with which it slowly beckons him back.

110. CASTING FOR MOOSE I

Richard Beazley: I was painting the fence. It was a beautiful hot day, and along came one of my dear friends, Jeff, and he decided that we should go fishing. Well it didn't take much time to talk me out of painting the fence. We'd [gone] fishing and we'd just going to cast out our lines into the lake. I got the cast going out and kept flicking my line back, and all of a sudden it snagged. And I thought, "Oh God, here goes another tree." I turned around and here was a great big bull moose. Well I didn't know what to do. I was kind of tied to him and didn't know whether to drop the fishing line or whether to run or what. And he started to chase me. Well fast as I could I got up to this great big tree, and I thought, "Well by golly, I'll run around the tree and it will at least give me time to think." As I was running around, [I] could hear this big moose snorting and blowing and everything right behind me, and his hot breath breathing down my neck. All of a sudden I remembered I had a bottle of turpentine still in my back pocket from painting the fence. So I broke it against the tree and put some on his rear end. Well it just stopped him right square in his tracks, and he started to rub against the tree. Of course the turpentine on the tree didn't help him any. And all that's left is this moose head on the wall.

111. CASTING FOR MOOSE II

Taft: You had a moose story?

Mary Pankoski: Oh this is—you [Alex] know that one better than me, too. About the fellow describing how he got this moose? He had the head mounted on the wall?

Alex Pankoski: Oh heck, that's a long story.

Taft: Go right ahead.

Alex Pankoski: You got to have a French accent.

Mary Pankoski: Well, you can cut it down so you give him the general idea.

Alex Pankoski: I heard that story from Painter, Game Commissioner of Saskatchewan.

Alex Pankoski: That was at that [trapper's] convention too. He was a federal man from Ottawa. And he was quite a guy for stories. He told me that story. Well, he stretched it for about ten minutes, and everybody laughed. This great trapper, he finished trapping and he came back. Sold his furs and went on a hell of a drunk. He sobered up; he was broke. So now what the heck he's going to do? Well he got a friend, Baptiste [French accent begins to take over], up in by Montreal. And he says, "he's got a good cabin, and I'll go and spend the summer in there." So he went there, got to the shack. Looked. Lots of cordwood in the corner, and here, half of the moose hanging on the wall, not half of the moose, but the head and the neck. So he waited for this Baptiste to come in. So Baptiste finally got back. Says to Baptiste, "As usual I see you got lots of wood over here." "By jeeze," he says, "that's no good. These American fishermen, they come over here with their hundred-dollar rod and reels. And they go and fish in the creek and they can't catch. I go with my pole and a line. I go cast a couple of time and I get a fish. So they throw their rod and their reels in the corner and they always take my line—my pole and line. So that's how all this wood [the fishing rods] got there." So I says, "Did you try them?" "Yes," he says, "I did try once. I cast once. Nothing. Then I cast again. Nothing. And so here she comes, the moose, on the other side of the river. A great [big one]. So I cast again and here I got a moose by the nose [laughs]. By gee, I'm not going to give that moose the line away. So I reel in the moose; she come and she's mad. Finally that old moose took after me. So I run around a big tree, and the moose after. So after it comes in [around the tree] I don't know who's chasing who. So you know, us trappers, we always carry a bottle of turpentine in our pockets in case of mosquito or bug or anything like that. So I get to the point where I can't run no more. I get the bottle of turpentine out and put some right on the back end. And the moose, he don't go no more around the tree. He goes through the bush. And he runs and he stops and he rubs, and he jumps and he stops and he rubs. By gee, by the time I got him, that's all that was left."

112. INSIDER'S VIEW OF MOOSE

Keith Henderson: People today, they think that the economic crunch and the hard times are bad, but they don't really know what it's all about. It's really the lap of luxury we're living today compared to the dirty thirties. I remember my dad, he was living in a French community at the time. And they're predominantly Liberal, as they always are. Oh times were tough, you know. He was quite a gardener. We had a large garden and that sort of supplied a lot of the food, but as far as meat is concerned, we didn't have any. So the winter was bad and he decided to go up in the northern part of B.C., and he was going to do a bit of trapping and he was going to shoot a moose. We'd have our meat then. And he hoped to make a few dollars by trapping. And this one day there was a large lake there and he went across the lake. It was frozen solid and he thought, well he'd be home in ample time [but] the valleys were twisting and it got a bit late. A storm blew up and just then he shot a moose. He gutted and cleaned this moose out and, oh, the blizzard just blew up terrible. He knew that there was just no way with the low temperature, and the freezing and the blizzard [that] he was just not going to survive the night. There was no shelter. There was little or nothing to make a shelter out of there. So he looked at this moose and he thought, "Well gosh that carcass is pretty warm, I have a heavy coat, I'll just crawl in this carcass of this moose and it's warm. At least it will protect me from the blizzard and the driving wind and the snow and everything. I'll survive the night that way." And so he got his big coat and he bundled up and he crawled in this moose, and he pulled the sides down—the flaps of the skin down. And he did. He survived the night real well, [and was] warm as toast in the morning. But god, when he woke up in the morning, he saw that there was just no way that he was going to get out. That damn carcass had frozen solid. Well he knew that death was going to come to him, and there was a tear came in his eye as he started to think of his wife and all the kids at home, and how were we going to survive, and things like that. I guess in all such cases, you know, your life sort of passes around in front of your eyes. It all unfolds like a motion picture. He thought back over happier days, and he was getting sadder by the minute. And then finally he remembered one time—the one and only time—he voted Liberal. And you know, he felt so small, he just crawled out of that hole in the gullet, and went off home.

MAN AND HIS WORKS

Of all the creatures in the forest, man has always shown the greatest interest in himself. If the qualities and abilities of lesser animals are the subject of tall tales, so too are those of *homo sapiens*. Human traits, both pleasant and unpleasant, are easily stretched beyond believability by the good storyteller. In the first section of this chapter, the characteristics of mankind are explored: his physical shortcomings and strengths—beauty, cleanliness, muscle, speed under duress, capacity, and memory; and his skills, such as they are, at chopping and cooking. The final section explores man's creations, some of which are truly remarkable. Whether in the reshaping of the landscape (mine shafts for example) or in the invention of great machines and contraptions (such as Swanson's rig), the need to exaggerate is clear. The tall tale takes over where plans and blueprints fail.

Attributes and Skills

113. UGLY ENOUGH

GILBERT HAINES: His mother was the ugliest woman in the world, and his father finally, in hard times, used to go and set her up to get a job. And she got a job at her neighbours as a scarecrow. She scared the crows so bad that they brought corn they'd swiped four years before.

114. SMELLY ENOUGH

JOHN ROBERTS: This one involved old Simmons. He lived way out on a lake just in from Bella Coola. He was a character and so was the whole family, but he lived there so long, he went nuts. Old Simmons, who didn't believe in bathing very often, believed in the medicinal use of bear fat. And there were lots of bears around that country; they used to come into his orchard and knock the fences down and strip the trees and things like that.

Evidently he was going along the trail somewhere [and] didn't have his rifle. He looked over his shoulder and there was a bear following him. So he speeded up and the bear speeded up. He speeded up again and the bear just getting going faster. Finally he thought, "Well, by God, that bear might be chasing me." So he dived under the tree. The bear just came around the bend and kept on going, climbed over the tree and just kept on up the trail.

So old Simmons was telling this to a bunch of the boys at Anahim Lake, including Lester Dorsey, and he says, "You know, I don't think that bear smelt me." Lester says, "On the contrary, I think the bear *did* smell you."

115. TOO SMELLY

John Roberts: When I first came here 25 years ago, this little creek that runs from Williams Lake to the Fraser River started off in a fairly wide valley. And a lot of these old fellows used to live in little one-room shacks down there. One character, old Bill, he had a vegetable patch [and] he grew mainly carrots. He used to believe in eating raw carrots and cooked carrots and goat's milk. He had this little herd of goats, and when the weather got pretty cold, he used to take them into his cabin with him. One Saturday afternoon a bunch of the boys were sitting around the hotel drinking and the discussion got around to who stank the most: old Bill or his goats. They went and got the goats and brought them into the hotel, and they stank so much that the barmaid fainted. Then they went and brought old Bill in, and he stank so much the goats fainted.

116. THE GRIZZLY DASH

Katherine Wood: This young chap, Dennis Collinson, grew up in Fort St. John. His people originally moved up from, I think it was, Texas, years ago in the Depression actually. When he got to be 18, he thought he'd like to go trapping in the north. Some of his brothers were already there. So he got a registered trapline in northern B.C. right near the junction of the Liard and the Fort Nelson rivers. And he was telling me he hired an Indian at Fort Nelson named Mike to go with him to cut trails out. Because the growth along the rivers there is very, very rapid, very big, because it's hot in the river valleys, they have to cut their traplines out every year. They had a horse with them and they took turns: one fellow would cut trail and one fellow would ride the horse for a while, and they packed their stuff on the horse. The old trappers around Fort Nelson [had] told the kid a lot of stories, you know, about "look out for this and look out for that" and they told him to watch out for bears. Because this was a big bear country—grizzlies. So this particular day Mike was on the horse, and Dennis was cutting trail. Of course they carried the gun in a sling, you see, at all times. It's pretty wild country. He was cutting the trail, and he had a gun [when] he suddenly called to Mike, "Look." He pointed to a tree not too far away up on the sidehill and there were two little bears up the tree. He pulled the gun up and put a cartridge into the chamber. Mike yelled, "Don't shoot," just as Dennis shot. He wounded one and they both fell out of the tree. Mike yelled to Dennis, "Get out of here quick!" Dennis looked up and he heard a roaring and he said it was just a great big red mouth surrounded by fur. It was coming like an express train, roaring through the bush. So he pulled up the gun, put a shell in the chamber, and shot at the bear. [Then] he went to put another shell in and there was no more shells in the magazine. He had shells in his pocket. By this time, of course, Mike had a pretty good start on him. So then he started to run down the trail, loading the gun as he went. And he passed the man on the horse.

117. THE LITTLE STRONGMAN

Harry Richardson: He claimed to be a veteran of the American Civil War. He worked on the early construction of the CPR up through the Kicking Horse Pass, and he was working as a section hand along the railroad. He saw the train coming and the Kicking Horse River was in flood at that time and one end of a bridge was washed out. So he said he got down underneath that bridge and acted as a pier while the train went over. He said that's what drove him down [and made him] so short.

118. THE STRONG WOMAN

Gilbert Haines: This great aunt was the one that put the fence around the farm. She knitted it with a couple of crowbars.

119. A MEMORABLE BREAKFAST

Jack Koyl: Well [there's] the story of a tourist going into Kamloops. He gets off the train and a tour guide had told him that there was an old Indian at the station who had a prodigious memory. So the tourist went up to him and said, "What did you have for breakfast on January 23, 1925?" The Indian said, "Eggs." Well five years later the same tourist comes back and he'd forgotten all about this. But he sees the old Indian there and thought he'd greet him. Stick[ing] his hand up, he says, "How." The old Indian says, "Scrambled."

120. MOM COULD CHOP WOOD

Ernie Streifel: Everybody was pretty poor, especially us folks. We lived in Pitt Meadows. And we used to have to get wood for the winter, because everybody had wood stoves. We used to get this wood, and my mom worked really hard all the time, you know. And she used to really work hard. Sometimes she used to always work day and night for us. [When] Mom and I would go out and chop our winter wood supply, we'd take four axes along. I'd cool two off in the creek while mom would chop with one in each hand. After we'd been working awhile like that, pretty soon mom would say, "Well, son, we'd better clear out, pretty soon all those chips will fall." So we'd clear out and the next day we'd go and haul back all the wood.

121. A DRUNKARD'S DEATH

Geoffrey Ellis: In Esquimalt many years ago, the old Esquimalt Brewery used to operate in the days before such things as workman's compensation and unemployment insurance. A chap by the name of Ben Dover, an immigrant from England, was living in Esquimalt. Ben was a very heavy drinker. Finally he achieved what was probably a lifetime ambition—he got a job in the local brewery. He hadn't been there more than about a week when he fell into the big beer vat and drowned himself. No telephones in those days so the foreman had to go and tell his widow what happened. He finally got to the house and said, "Are you the Widow Dover?" She said, "I am not. I'm Mrs. Ben Dover." "Well, you're the Widow Dover now. Ben fell into the big beer vat this morning and drowned himself." "Oh, what a nasty mishap," she said, "I am upset. Did he suffer much?" The foreman said, "No, I don't think so. He climbed out three times to go to the toilet."

122. THE PANCAKE COOK

Jack Koyl: Talking about Saskatoon, my old dad, he went there in 1907, I think it was. He took us camping down in Yoho National Park and Takakkaw Falls. We were out camping and he was cooking pancakes for breakfast, flipping them with the pan. And he told us a story of when he was a young fellow out camping, that one time he was flipping pancakes and he flipped them up so high they didn't come down till noon and they had to have them for lunch.

123. ANOTHER PANCAKE COOK

Mary Pankoski: He was fixing supper, and his partner went out in the bush to scare up a moose. And the moose run back and right through the campfire and stuck his foot in this pancake. And they didn't get the moose. They finally quit, but then they came back two years later and they got this same moose. They knew it was the same for he still had this pancake around his foot.

124. SASQUATCH BITES THE BISCUIT

There were two old prospectors in the wilds of Vancouver Island, and after the day's work, [they] set about getting a meal, [and] found they were out of bread. So one made some biscuits. These were set aside when done to cool. When the rest of the meal was ready, they looked for the biscuits, but saw instead a sasquatch bent over in agony, staggering away. No biscuits in sight—sasquatch was never seen again; the biscuits were just too much for him (or her).

[Mrs. B.A. McKelvie; 1982]

125. BUNYAN COMES TO B.C.

Mark Mealing: And I asked him, since I was sittting in on the class at the time, if he'd ever heard any Paul Bunyan stories. And he said he'd heard two. One of them I forget because it was a fairly conventional one. The other one [began], "Do you know where the Rocky Mountains came from?" And everybody said no, they didn't know the Rocky Mountains came from anywhere especially. He said, "Well look at the Prairies," he said, "any trees on the Prairies?" And even those of us who'd been there admitted that the Prairies weren't the place you went looking for trees, if you came from British Columbia. "Well," he said, "in the days when old Paul was moving west, Babe the blue ox got hungry. And Paul said, well about all there is to eat down here is trees. So Babe ate all the trees he could find, and that's why there are no trees on the Prairies left, because Babe ate them all. And then Babe took the biggest dump you ever saw, and that's where the Rocky Mountains come from."

Noteworthy Constructions and Machines

126. THE CARBIDE MINE

Ernie Haggstrom: Well, this guy was complaining about having to walk so far in the mine. Down these tunnels and that. And [someone] says, "Well, heck," he says, "you worry about walking into a mine. Hell, should have been with me when I worked in the carbide mine. We really had to work there, but what made me mad was I had to walk two miles to take a spit."*

127. THE DEEP MINE SHAFT

Ernie Haggstrom: When I worked in Copper Mountain. Got down in the eighth level. And this guy was complaining about having to go so far underground. And Jimmy Lyons sat and listened to him for a little while. He said, "Hey, you shouldn't worry. Gee, you should have been with me. A friend of mine got a superintendent job in South Africa in a diamond mine. He wrote me a letter to come down and get a job down there with him.

So I went to South Africa to the diamond mines. I asked where Mr. McLeod was, the superintendent. He said. 'Well, he's in the mine today. The shaft is over there, the cage. And he'll come out. Just wait over there and you'll see him come off shift.' I went and stood there for two hours and nobody came. The cage never opened. I could hear the cage running, and I started wondering and I went and looked around and there was the cage shack where the operator was. So I went in and looked and there was the cageman, and he was fast asleep. I got panicky and I shook him. 'Hey, you're running the cage and you're fast asleep?' He looked at his watch and says, 'Heck,' he says, 'it's only four o'clock. What day is it?' So I said it was Tuesday. He says, 'Don't worry about it. The cage won't stop till two o'clock Wednesday morning."

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* Carbide and water produce acetylene.

128. PAUL BUNYAN WAS A PIKER

'Twas a "sky-line" show, with a yard of snow piled high on log and chunk,
And around a fire by the "whistle-wire" the crew were kidding the "Punk."
That jostling bunch were eating their lunch, and talking of screw-ball schemes,
When a "Choker-man" at once began to boast of big machines:
Of a twelve drum rig, with a boiler so big, the stack was as high as the spar!!
With a playful shove, while drying his glove, the "Hooker" then started from par.

"Now I have a hunch, you Sunday-School bunch think donkeys are something with ears.
Punched, bored, nor drilled, you've never been thrilled by the rumble of ponderous gears.
Paul Bunyan's yarns of colossal barns, and tales of the big blue ox,
Are awfully tame and always the same; in fact, they're too orthodox.
So listen, you birds, to my truthful words of a tale of a big machine;
For I'm telling you, that when I'm through, you'll marvel at what I have seen.

"In a 'Redwood' show, a long time ago, way down in the 'Sun-shine' state;
Down where the crew have plenty to do and they log at a 'hi-ball' rate.
They had a machine as long as a dream and as wide as a good-sized claim.
You talk of your drums! you home-guard bums should have seen the size of her 'main'!
A twelve-mile haul was nothing at all, her exhaust made clouds in the sky,
That fell down again in the form of rain, so a man could never keep dry.

"That ponderous rig was so God awful big! it's hard for a man to compare;
But to give you the gist, the fireman was missed, we looked and searched everywhere.
He was getting a drink, I'm inclined to think, and had fallen into the tank;
Though we grappled around, he couldn't be found—O! what had become of poor Hank?
So I looked in the glass, and there, alas, was our fog-promoting toiler—
Floating there loose, all cooked like a goose, in the glass on the side of the boiler.
Now perhaps you surmise the enormous size of the monster of big machines,
So you never should boast of 'pots' on the coast, like 'eleven by seventeen'!"

[Robert E. Swanson]

129. THE SNAGGED ANCHOR

ALEX PANKOSKI: Len beat Frank Schlitz out once [at storytelling] . . . [on a log drive] he was slinging them [logs] down there, and Len came out with the main ties, logs, boomed them into town to the mill. This time Len and me were pulling the boom when about halfways down there's a [some obstacle] so he dropped anchor [and cleared up the obstacle]. He got hold of the rope to pull the anchor up, but the damned thing got hooked onto something. He pulled and he pulled and he pulled. And there's—on the hills—we had the lookout towers to spy for fire. So he pulled—it happened there. That's where it happened. That's where that fire-hill tower was. He brought that down from the bottom of the lake. Then Schlitz says, "I quit."

130. ENGINE TROUBLE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Lou Newell: [Once] when flying in the mountainous regions of northern B.C., the plane developed engine trouble. In this region one does not find an easy place to put down. As I coaxed the motor to keep going—even slowly—I passed over a small level edge of the side of the mountain, much too small for a proper touchdown. However, if I was going to get out of this, I had to do something now. So I put the plane into a steep climb. The engine sputtered and failed, so I let it slip slowly backwards and made a touchdown tail first. This way I didn't need the normal runway. The engine died, and there I sat completely at loss as to what I was going to do. I spied three large eagles sitting on a branch, so I drew the hunting knife from my seat pack and threw it at the branch, split it, and the eagles' legs fell through the branch. I lashed quickly the ends of the branch, tied it to the wings of my plane and I took off, and landed home safely at night.

131. THE SUBMARINE DESTROYERS

Christopher Brayshaw: It's a little-known fact that during the Second World War there was a special convoy of destroyers called the Green Paint Brigade. Their job was to hunt down the Nazi wolfpack and destroy them, and they did this in a very unique manner. They'd cruise on the surface until the sonar detected a German wolfpack below. Then the ships in the convoy would circle around, spreading green paint on the water from tanks on the back [of the ships.] The German commander, hearing their engines, would put his periscope up for a look. But the thing is, when he hit the green paint, it would form a film over the periscope and he wouldn't know he hit the surface. The sub would just keep on rising and rising. The sailors usually waited until it was about 500 feet in the air, and then shot it down with their anti-aircraft guns.

132. THE JONAH WATCH

Reude Berry: He had a pocket watch that you never had to wind. They said that the watch was guaranteed accurate to within so many seconds a year, and it was guaranteed for 20 years. He'd been fishing somewhere in the Okeefenokee Swamp in Florida. And his watch had fallen out of his jacket pocket. He couldn't grab it in time and it sunk down into one of the deep holes. And he was telling us that he used to go in there fishing just about every year, because there was one big old catfish that he was really trying to get. That sucker was the biggest catfish anybody had ever heard of. And it was about 18 years later that he was up in there. He had a spin reel, a spin casting reel, and he had the line, a good skookum line. He was taking it off the spool that it was shipped in and was putting it on the drum of his spin-caster, when the drum slipped out of his hands and fell. It was a metal spool. But he really wasn't prepared for this, for he only had about half of his line on his reel. All of the sudden, Jeez, he saw the tip of his rod start to move, and he made a dive for his rod and he reefed on it. Well anyway, there was a strain pulling, but, Jeez, when this fish jumped, I guess it was two or three hundred yards [away]. Now he didn't have that much line out. So evidently what had happened was the fish had swallowed this stinking spool of line and it was playing out. So anyway, somehow the line gets snagged in the spool and the fish—no way was he going to let it go. So he played this ruddy fish, and that [started] early in the morning. He played it all day. And his partner was feeding him beer and feeding him a sandwich when he got hungry; and had to talk to him to keep him awake, because he fought that fish all day and all night, and it was two o'clock the next afternoon before he tired that fish out and got it in. And it was the biggest damn catfish they had ever seen in their lives, When he got cleaning this ruddy thing, here in the belly was this damned old watch, and it was only two and half minutes slow.

133. GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK

Lou Newell: Well my wife and I were looking at this grandfather's clock down here in Woodward's the other day, and it brought back memories of my grandfather's clock that he had. And that clock was so old—you know the pendulum that swings back and forth? Well the shadow on that had worn a hole through the back of it.

134. A FINAL STRETCH OF THE TRUTH

Mary Pankoski: There's the one guy who made a set of harness out of rawhide for his oxen. He went out to get a load of wood, and of course it started to rain. The harness stretched and stretched and stretched, and by the time he got his oxen home, the load of wood was way out in the bush yet. Well he got mad. He throwed the harness off the oxen; threw it on a stump. And it dried out and the next morning the darn load of wood had pulled right up to the [cabin].

The Storytellers

Richard Beazley: Born in Calgary in 1934, Mr. Beazley was a Boy Scout leader in his hometown for many years. In 1979 he moved to Kelowna where he is a shipper and receiver for a beverage company. In the past, he was a diesel mechanic and worked in real estate. I interviewed him in Kelowna on July 18, 1982 (Provincial Archives of British Columbia tape number 3973:27).

Reg Beck: Mr. Beck was born at Cawston, B.C. For a number of years he worked as a radio operator in the Northwest Territories, but he is now a high school teacher in Williams Lake. I met and talked with Mr. Beck in the home of John Roberts on July 23, 1982, but did not have the opportunity to interview him with a tape recorder.

Reude Berry: Mr. Berry is truly a jack of all trades and has worked in many of the professions from which tall tales grow. Born in Moncton, New Brunswick, in 1927, he worked in various parts of the country before settling in British Columbia in the late 1940s. At different times in his life he has been a farmer, logger, prospector, seaman, construction worker, train conductor, union organizer and representative, miner, hotel manager, and professional musician. Presently, he is an electrician and radio repairman. I interviewed him and his wife, Hazel, in their home on the outskirts of Golden on July 30, 1982 (3973:38–40).

Christopher and Drew Brayshaw: I interviewed these youngsters in West Vancouver on July 14, 1982 (3973:16). Christopher, born in 1970, has a well-deserved reputation as a joker, storyteller, and trickster. His brother, Drew, who is two years his junior, seems intent on establishing his own reputation as a storyteller.

Michael Bruce: Although born in Calgary in 1911, Mr. Bruce moved at a very early age to Pincher Creek, Alberta. He recalls scratching a living from 300 acres of rented land —"twenty acres of it flat"— during the Depression. He came to the Cowichan Bay area in 1936; later he became a dockyard stocktaker in Victoria. He has written and published many stories; his first was "Gentlemen, Your Verdict" in *Maclean's Magazine* in 1946. Because Mr. Bruce is primarily a writer, he preferred writing out his stories, rather than recording them on tape. I talked to him in Victoria on July 12, 1982.

Michael Donoghue: Born in Kingston, Ontario, in 1946, Mr. Donoghue came to Vancouver with his parents in 1952. He learned his tales while a cannery accountant; as part of this job, he spent six months of every year at a Bella Bella cannery. He now works in the hotel business. I interviewed him in his home at Pitt Meadows on July 16, 1982 (3973:23).

Geoffrey Ellis: Ellis was born in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England in 1905. In the early 1920s he was a jackaroo and farm hand in Australia, then moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1925. For a while he was a rancher in Alberta and British Columbia, and a carpenter in Victoria, but at the beginning of the Depression he became a B.C. Provincial Policeman, a job he kept for fourteen years. In later years he was first manager and then owner of a credit bureau in Victoria. Mr. Ellis has a great store of jokes and stories, as well as tall tales, many of which he shared with me when I interviewed him in his home in Victoria on July 9, 1982 (3973:8-9).

Alfred Ferguson: Alfred Ferguson was born in Victoria in 1909. At the age of 15 he moved to Seattle to apprentice as a carpenter. In the past he also worked on the harvest and in the woods, but he has spent most of his life as a free-lance craftsman in lathing. I interviewed him and his wife, Jessie, in their home in Victoria on July 11, 1982 (3973:10).

John Gibson: Dr. Gibson was born in Keremeos in 1914. He recieved his medical education from Queens University and practised in Atlin, Fort Simpson, Prince Rupert, and more recently in Penticton, where he now lives. He was the coroner in Penticton before his retirement. Being a duck hunter and fisherman has not hurt his storytelling abilities. I interviewed him in his home on July 18, 1982 (3973:28).

Ernie Haggstrom: Mr. Haggstrom is a retired miner, but he also worked in construction, logging, and as a seaman. He was born in 1921 in Kinistino, Saskatchewan. He has published and recorded two religious songs. I interviewed him in his home in Surrey on July 5, 1982 (3973:19-20).

Gilbert Haines: Mr. Haines was born near Iron Springs, about thirty miles northeast of Lethbridge, in 1913. He spent his youth on the farm until he came to Victoria with his parents in 1935. There he eventually became an electronics teacher and salesman. I interviewed him in his home in Esquimalt on July 13, 1982 (3973:13).

Hubert Hall: The late Mr. Hall was born at Monouth, England in 1883. He came to Olds, Alberta, as a teenager and worked on a ranch; later he worked as an axeman for the Kootenay Central Railway construction, and eventually became a surveyor, and as such he worked throughout British Columbia. In addition, he was a member of the Rocky Mountain Rangers. He was interviewed by Sam Sunter on July 3, 1963 (3970:6). Mr. Hall died in 1966.

Keith Henderson: Mr. Henderson was born near Boissevain, Manitoba, in 1923 but soon moved to the Turtle Mountain area of that province, where his father was a game warden. As a boy, he ran trap lines and generally learned how to take care of himself in the wilderness. He came to British Columbia where he worked in the shipyards. He has also been an electronics salesman and has worked in land development. I interviewed him in his home in Victoria on July 12, 1982 (3973:11).

Ruby Irwin: Born in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, in 1906. Ruby Irwin learned about farming and trapping at a very early age. In fact, in 1918, when her father was incapacitated by the flu, she had the responsibility of getting in the crop. She travelled with her father from the Cariboo to northern Ontario on his prospecting ventures, but she eventually settled in Edmonton where she became a public stenographer. She recalls working for R.B. Bennett and William Aberhart before either man went into politics. I interviewed her in New Westminster on July 17, 1982 (3973:24).

Joyce Kind: Joyce Kind was born in Lynn Valley in North Vancouver in 1925. I interviewed her and Donald Seymour in their home in North Vancouver on July 16, 1982 (3973:22).

Jack Koyl: Mr. Koyl was born in Saskatoon in 1916 and received his training in chemical engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. He was with an engineering company in British Columbia and has had considerable experience travelling in the forests of the province. He is now a retired vice-president of a chemical engineering company. I interviewed him in his home in Victoria on July 12, 1982 (3973:12).

Bill Law: Although born in New Zealand in 1897, he came to Vancouver with his family in 1898. He has lived in many places along the coast of the province where he worked as an engineer on inshore boats and later as captain of several ships and tubgoats. For many years, Mr. Law wrote a column in *The Fisherman* in which he described the local characters of the B.C. coast. I interviewed him in Parksville on July 8, 1982 (3973:4-5).

Ray Logie: Mr. Logie was born in 1933 in Esquimalt, where he still lives. He worked with timber crews as a firefighter in the early 1950s. He is a well-known British Columbian playwright, and also writes children's stories. He was the province's drama consultant. I interviewed him on July 26, 1982 (3973:34).

Thomas Loveder: Mr. Loveder was born in 1898 in Norfolk, England, and came to British Columbia in 1907 where he lived at various times in Huntingdon, Mission, and Ruby Creek while his father worked for the CPR. He can claim to be the youngest man to ever interview Sir Wilfred Laurier, when at the age of six he chatted and shared a piece of watermelon with a distinguished elderly gentleman, who was waiting for his private coach to continue on to Vancouver after a delay at Ruby Creek. As a young man, Mr. Loveder worked as a logger and was part of the Canadian army contingent that found itself in Vladivostok during the First World War. After the war, he worked for a meat packing company and eventually became a meat-inspector for the Federal Department of Agriculture, a job which took him all over the province. I interviewed him in his home in Vancouver on July 14, 1982 (3973:15).

Duncan MacMillan: Mr. MacMillan was born in Vancouver in 1922. He has had a varied career as a railroad worker, fisherman and logger, although his primary occupations have been mining and prospecting. He has travelled extensively in British Columbia and can tell stories of the many characters whom he has met in his various lines of work. I interviewed him at the Whalley Legion on July 15, 1982 (3973:18).

Keith McColl: Although he was born in Ottawa in 1910, Mr. McColl spent his youth in Youngstown, Alberta. At the age of 18, he moved to Calgary. He has held a number of different jobs over the years, including managing a grocery store in Fort St. John in the late 1940s. In 1954 he moved to Vancouver. Mr. McColl keeps a scrapbook of newspaper and magazine clippings of jokes, true stories, photographs, and of course tall tales. I interviewed him in his home in Vancouver on July 16, 1982 (3973:21).

David "Cougar" McLay: Cougar McLay was born in Shotts, Scotland, in 1929, but came to Kimberley with his father the next year. He attended Notre Dame College in Wilcox, Saskatchewan, where he was a member of Father Athole Murray's Hounds of Notre Dame hockey team. Although he worked in the mines, Cougar McLay has spent most of his life as a construction worker, specializing in dam construction. He is a fine storyteller who can improvise a tall tale on the spur of the moment. I interviewed him and Noelle Whitford in the Kimberley Elks Club on July 21, 1982 (3973:30).

Mark Mealing: Dr. Mealing was born in Victoria in 1938. For a number of years he was a school teacher in the Fraser Valley, but he eventually went to the University of

Pennsylvania where he received a doctorate in folklore. He now teaches anthropology and folklore at Selkirk College in Castlegar. He has long been an investigator of Doukhobor culture and has been involved in mediations between the Doukhobors and outside authorities. As a folklorist, Dr. Mealing knows many stories, but the ones I collected from him are a part of his personal storehouse of tales. I interviewed him in Robson on July 29, 1982 (3973:37).

Lou Newell: Mr. Newell was born in Edmonton in 1923, and spent his youth in Smith, Alberta. He worked on the roads in Alberta, before starting his career in law enforcement. He has been an RCMP officer, a member of the military police, and more recently the administrator of the local jail in his present home of Penticton. He is also the editor of *The Silver Lining*, a Lion's Club newsletter, which includes his tall tales as a regular feature of the publication. I interviewed him in his home on July 17, 1982 (3973:25).

Alex and Mary Pankoski: The Pankoskis were both born in Saskatchewan — Alex in 1918 at Yorkton and Mary at Moose Jaw in 1906 — but both moved to Big River, Saskatchewan, early in their lives. There, the Pankoskis made a living by farming, trapping, and raising mink, rabbits and goats. In 1974, they retired to Kelowna where I interviewed them in their home on July 18, 1982 (3973:26).

Harry Richardson: Mr. Richardson was born in Golden in 1903, and grew up in Windermere. As a young man, he worked at various agricultural jobs in British Columbia and Alberta, from haying to driving cattle. He was a construction worker on the Banff-Windermere road, and he recalls many stories of living in the construction camps. His main occupation, however, was as a lineman for telephone and electric companies in British Columbia and Alberta. Mr. Richardson has spent his retirement years tracing the history of the East Kootenays; in the process he has compiled a tremendous amount of information on the people and events which make up the history of that region. Quite naturally, he has also become a fine storyteller and historian. I interviewed him in his home in Victoria on July 6, 1982 (3973:1-2).

John Roberts: Dr. John Roberts was born near Melbourne, Australia, in 1922. He was first in the Australian Cavalry and then the airforce during World War II. After working in the family store for a number of years, he went to the University of Guelph in Ontario to become a veterinarian. In the late 1950s he began his practice in Williams Lake where he is now coroner. He published *Cariboo Chronicles* in 1979. I interviewed him in his home on July 23, 1982 (3973:33).

Donald Seymour: Born in 1914 on Saltspring Island, Mr. Seymour has held a number of jobs over the years. I interviewed him and Joyce Kind in their home in North Vancouver on July 16, 1982 (3973:22).

Charles Simpson: Mr. Simpson was born in 1922 in New Toronto, Ontario. In his youth, he worked on farms in Ontario, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Minnesota. He is now retired in Kelowna. Mr. Simpson, though not primarily a tall taleteller, is very talented as a teller of personal experience stories. I interviewed him on July 19, 1982 (3973:29).

Ernie Streifel: Born in Kelowna in early 1940s, Mr. Streifel has spent most of his life in Pitt Meadows. He has a reputation among his friends and neighbors as a storyteller and he is indeed a master of the impromptu tall tale. He now works for a railroad. I interviewed him and his wife Joanna, in Maple Ridge on July 15, 1982 (3973:17).

ROBERT SWANSON: Born in Reading, England, Mr. Swanson moved to East Wellington on Vancouver Island at the age of one. In his youth he was a logger, but he became an engineer and travelled to the logging camps to service their steam donkeys. In the 1940s, he gained a reputation as the "Lumberman's Poet" when he published four books of recitations and poems, which he either heard in the logging camps or composed himself. His poetry is in the style of Robert W. Service, whom he greatly admired and used as a model; indeed, Service personally encouraged him in his work. Mr. Swanson is a great storehouse of stories and descriptions of life in the lumber woods. He has gained fame for turning the steam whistle into a musical instrument, and it was his whistle that played the first four notes of "O Canada" on the Confederation train. He has his own engineering consulting firm in Vancouver and remains very interested in the nature and use of sound. I interviewed him at his home in Vancouver on July 28, 1982 (3973:36).

BRUCE WATT: Although born in Chilliwack in 1926, Mr. Watt has spent most of his life as a rancher at Big Creek. He knows much about cowboy life in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. In addition, he has acted as a guide in that area. I interviewed him at the offices of the CKWL Radio Station in Williams Lake on July 23, 1982 (3973:32).

KATHERINE WOOD: Mrs. Wood was born in Douglas, Ontario, in 1912. She became entranced with the north when she accompanied her uncle, a doctor, to Aklavik in 1938. Her husband was an agent for the Hudson's Bay Company and together they lived in many communities in the north, including Nelson Forks, Big Beaver House, Oxford House, Cross Lake, Norway House, and Moose Factory. She has now retired to Victoria where I interviewed her on July 9, 1982 (3973:7)

Richard Beazley

Reude Berry

Michael Bruce

Chris Brayshaw

Drew Brayshaw

Mike Donoghue

Geoffrey Ellis

Alfred Ferguson

John Gibson

Ernie Haggstrom

Gilbert Haines

Keith Henderson

Ruby Irwin

Bill Law

Ray Logie

Thomas Loveder

Joyce Kind

Jack Koyl

Cougar McLay

Keith McColl

Duncan MacMillan

Mark Mealing

Lou Newell

Alex Panoski

Harry Richardson

John Roberts

Don Seymour

Charles Simpson

Ernie Streifel

Robert Swanson

Bruce Watt

Kay Wood

Notes to the Tales

The following notes trace the history of these tales in at least two ways: the storyteller's immediate source, if known, and the international distribution of the tales. In both cases, the history is spotty, since many of the tellers could not remember where they learned their stories; and the only clue to the international distribution of these tales lies in published or collected versions of the tales presented here. I have attempted to find analogous versions in the major tall tale collections (see the bibliography); as well, I have consulted lesser collections, especially Canadian collections, in order to find further parallels to these tales.

In the chapter, The Tall Tale in British Columbia, the tale told by Geoffrey Ellis on p. 4 is also found in North Carolina and Virginia (Reaver *X1157.1.). I can find no parallels to Mr. Koyl's tale on p. 4, nor to Mr. Haine's story on p. 4 and 5. The raven tale on p. 5 was submitted by D. Hone of South Burnaby in a letter to the Provincial Archives on June 10, 1982. This story is a strange mixture of an Indian myth and a tall tale; its closest parallels in the tall tale literature come from sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas pp. 91-92), Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and Arizona (Baughman X1215.13*(c)) in which dogs, foxes or other animals give birth while chasing their prey; the newly-born animals usually follow their mother in the chase as soon as they are born. For notes to Mr. Berry's tale on p. 6 see tale No. 72. For Christopher Brayshaw's tale on p. 7 see tale No. 62; birds (or other beasts) which lay square eggs nest in Ontario (Robins p. 51) and in Kentucky, Missouri, New York and Wisconsin (Baughman X1392.3*. and X1523.3*(j). and Du Mond pp 129-35).

1. THE DENSE FOREST I. This tale is known in Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and New York (Baughman X903(a)., Jansen p. 223 and Welsch II p. 65).

2. THE DENSE FOREST II. Mr. Berry learned this tale from a fellow construction worker in Ontario in the mid 1940s. The teller was a jokester who kept the whole crew amused and helped time to pass with his stories. This jokester was from British Columbia. See the previous tale for parallels. As well, the motif of the exceptionally tall tree is recorded in Ontario (Robins pp. 47-48) and in Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Virginia (Baughman X1471(i)., Davis p. 65 and Welsch II p. 11).

3. THE RUBBER MINE I. This tale falls under the general heading of Baughman X1088*. concerning remarkable mines, but is also related to another general Baughman motif, X1084.4*(a). *Driller strikes layer of rubber.*

4. THE RUBBER MINE II. This is like the previous story, but the added description of the poor miner is similar to that of the man in rubber boots who couldn't stop bouncing, as found in Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi. Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1021.1(a). and Reaver X1021.1.).

5. TOFINO CABBAGES. Winnie Dixon told this tale to Bob Bossin (3878:23-25) who transcribed it in his *Settling Clayoquot*, SOUND HERITAGE SERIES, Number 33 (Victoria: Sound and Moving Image Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1981), p. 21. Mrs. Dixon was born in Scotland, then came to Canada in 1912 with her parents and eventually settled in Clayoquot. In general, this tale falls under the heading of "great vegetable tales" told all over the world: Argentina,

Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the USSR, the West Indies and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1960D), as well as in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee (Baughman X1401. and Reaver X1401.). More specific tales about great cabbages may be found in Italy (Thompson X1423.1.) and in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, New York and Tennessee (Baughman X1423ff. and Reaver X1423.1.).

6. A NEW USE FOR WATERMELONS. This story falls into the same category as the previous tale, but is also allied to tales of large watermelons found in Indiana and Texas (Baughman X1411.1.1. and Reaver X1411.1.1). For an Oregon version in which a watermelon is used as a container for moonshine, see Beckham p. 78.

7. PAUL BUNYAN'S ARCHIVES. Written and published by Robert E. Swanson in *Rhymes of a Lumberjack* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1943), pp. 10–14, and reprinted with Mr. Swanson's permission. The idea that a tall tale hero is responsible for landscape features is found in Kentucky, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin (Baughman X956*. and X958ff. and Reaver X958.). The great ox is a worldwide motif: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the USSR, the West Indies and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1960A), as well as Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia (Reaver X1237ff.). Reference to the distance between the ox's eyes is found in Ontario (Robins pp. xiii and 89) and Michigan, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin (Baughman X1237.2.3* (e)ff.) The general motif of the great tree is also widespread: Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lappland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey the USSR and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1960G). The more specific tale of two crews chopping on opposite sides of the same tree is found in Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and Nova Scotia (Fauset I pp. 70-71) and in Illinois, New England, New York, North Carolina, Texas and Vermont (Baughman X1471.1*. and Mullen pp. 145-46).

8. THE TREE BRIDGE I. As mentioned in the first chapter, Mr. McColl heard this story on a radio program while on a trip to Arizona. The tale is found in Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman X1471.2*. and Reaver *X1471.1.).

9. THE TREE BRIDGE II. See the previous tale for notes.

10. THE TREE BRIDGE III. This is a mechanized version of the previous two tales.

11. THE PETRIFIED FOREST. Mr. Richardson heard this tale over half a century ago from an old-time taleteller and eccentric named Bugram, who was born in the United States, but who spent much of his life in the East Kootenays. There are similar tales from Kentucky, Nebraska and Texas (Baughman X1741.3(a). and X1751(a)., Reaver X1741.3. and Welsch I p. 69).

12. A CHINESE CHRISTMAS. Mr. Newell read this tale from his tall tale column in *The Silver Lining*, a Lions Club newsletter which he edits. I could find no close parallels to this tale, but there is a tale of a hinged locomotive on a crooked track from Michigan (Baughman X1526.1(b).), another from the western United States about a great dining

room where the waiter's grandchildren eventually help with the meal (Baughman X1032.3*(a).), as well as a tale of a Michigan diningroom where lamb chops become mutton chops by the time they are served (Baughman X1032.3*(b).).

13. CARIBOO AIR. Mr. McColl clipped this story from Paul St. Pierre's column in the *Vancouver Sun*, but his telling is his own version of the tale. Other versions may be found in Alabama, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania (Baughman X1663.1.1.* and Reaver X1663.1.).

14. HEALTHY COUNTRY. Although this collection steers clear of published tales, I could not resist including what may well be the earliest reported tall tale in British Columbia. This story was printed in P.L. Trout's, *Prospector's Manual: Being a Full and Complete History and Description of the Newly Discovered Gold Mines on Granite Creek, The Canyon of the Tulameen River, and Other New Mineral Discoveries in the Similkameen Country, with Full Instructions as to How to Get There and What to Do on Arriving There. Also: Its Many Advantages as an Agricultural, Stock Raising and Lumbering Country. Designed for the Use of Emigrants, Tourists, Sportsmen and Gold Seekers, with Maps*, (1886). The tale of a country which old people must leave so that they can die goes back to at least sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas p. 113), while similar tales can be found in more recent times in Alberta (Gard p. 303), California and Idaho (Baughman X1663.2.).

15. A SOUTHERN HEAT WAVE. This is Mr. Newell's oral version of the tale, rather than a written one from *The Silver Lining*. This story is very widespread in the United States, having been collected in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia (Baughman X1633.1., Reaver X1663.1., Davis pp. 32-33, Du Mond pp. 18-10, Welsh I p. 31 and Welsch II p. 65).

16. COLD CONVERSATION I. Mr. Newell reads this tale from *The Silver Lining*. He heard the story of the half-frozen coffee when he was patrolling in northern Alberta, and combined that tale with one about words freezing, which he heard years later, to make the present tale. Stories of how the cold affects thermometers in absurd ways are found in Alabama, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, New York and Texas (Baughman 1622.3.1*ff., Reaver *X1624ff., Du Mond p. 59 and Welsch I pp. 29-30). The half-frozen, half-boiled motif was collected in Alberta (Halpert p. 43), as well as in Nebraska and New Jersey (Baughman X1622.3.3.1*(b). and Welsch I p. 29). The main absurdity of the story, words freezing, is an ancient motif, going back at least as far as Plutarch (347 B.C.), and is found in present-day Canada (Shelley pp. 167 and 174) and more specifically in Alberta (Halpert p. 43), Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and Ontario (Robins pp. 20-21), in Finland and Spain (Aarne-Thompson 1889F), as well as in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman 1889F and X1623.2ff., Reaver X1623.2ff., Davis p. 25, Du Mond pp. 58–61 and Joines p. 6).

17. COLD CONVERSATION II. See the previous tale for notes.

18. WHISTLING IN THE COLD. This story is obviously related to the previous two. The frozen whistle motif is found in Nebraska, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman X1623.7.1*ff. and Welsch I p. 28).

19. THE FROZEN FLAME. Mr. Henderson heard this tale from the old-timers who used to stop in at his father's cabin in the Turtle Mountain area of Manitoba. This popular tale is found in Canada (Shelley p. 174) and more specifically in New Brunswick (L. Thomas p. 196 where it's a frozen light bulb), Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and Ontario (Robins p. 20). In the United States the tale is told in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman X1623.3.3., Reaver X1623.3., Davis p. 23, Poston p. 45 and Welsch I pp. 28-29). See also tale No. 26 in this collection.

20. A QUICK FREEZE. This tale has an obvious relationship to the half-frozen, half-boiled motif in tale No. 16 above. It is found in Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin (Baughman X1622.3.3.1*., Reaver *X1623.6., Welsch I p. 28 and Welsch II p. 66).

21. TRAVELS IN THE NORTH. Written by Mr. MacMillan and submitted in a letter to the Provincial Archives on June 21, 1982. He did not repeat this tale during our interview since he does not normally recite it. For Mr. MacMillan, the written form of the tale is most appropriate. For cold affecting the thermometer, see tale No. 16 above. There is one tale reported from New Jersey in which air is frozen in a slashed tire (Baughman X1623.4*(b).).

22. THE ICE PATCH. Mr. Newell has not yet written this tale for his column. Although there are no exact parallels to this tale in the literature, there are tales of frozen smoke from Nebraska, South Carolina and Tennessee (Baughman X1623.6*., Reaver *1623.12, Welsch I pp. 28-29 and Welsch II p. 68).

23. THE FROZEN KISS. I can find no parallels to this tale.

24. A COLD CALL OF NATURE I. I cannot find exact parallels to this tale, but tales of the immediate freezing of urine were told in sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas pp. 94 and 97). These same Frenchmen seemed to enjoy a tale of feces freezing during defecation (G. Thomas p. 150), and in more recent times a story is told in Missouri of people having to stand up to defecate because of the deep snow (Baughman X1653.3(g).), both of which seem to be in the same spirit as this tale.

25. A COLD CALL OF NATURE II. See the previous tale.

26. COLD COMFORT. I can find no parallels to the main absurdity in Mr. Berry's tale, but the frozen flame is common enough (see tale No. 19). The more specific motif of frozen flames as candy or popcicles is found in Saskatchewan (CBC II) and South Carolina (Reaver *X1623.3.3.).

27. FROZEN STIFF. This tale was told by an anonymous male caller to the CFAX radio station in Victoria during a tall taletelling phone-in program on July 7, 1982. The same tale is found in Alberta (Gard pp. 296-97), Norway (Hennigsen I p. 208) and in

Idaho, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1622.1.1*(a)., Reaver *X1623.8.1. and Welsch I p. 28).

28. RACING THE CHINOOK. Not surprisingly, this tale is found in several versions in Alberta (Baughman X1606.1(ea), Gard pp. 198-99, Halpert pp. 37 and 41 and Kendall pp. 196-97 in which a bear chases after a man on the edge of a chinook).

29. CHINOOK HANG-UPS. This is the more common chinook tale. It occurs in Alberta (Gard p. 198 and Halpert p. 37), but also in Illinois, Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1606.1(a), and Reaver X1653.1.). A similar story from Nebraska concerns swiftly shifting sands rather than melting snow (Welsch I pp. 18-19).

30. MORE CHINOOK HANG-UPS. This tale was told by an anonymous female caller to the CFAX Radio Station in Victoria during a tall taletelling phone-in program on July 7, 1982. Obviously related to the two previous stories, it falls under the general category of Baughman X1606.1. *Lies about quick change from warm to cold*.

31. THE STRONG WIND. Mr. Newell learned this story from his father-in-law, but has yet to publish it in his tall tale column. In most tales of this sort, the wind blows postholes *out* of the ground, rather than into the ground (see Baughman X1611.1.15.1.*ff.). Perhaps this tale belongs under the general Baughman motif-number X1611.1.16*. *Remarkable wind does work for man*.

32. THE WIND GAUGE. I have reconstructed this tale from a non-taped conversation with Reg Beck. He heard it over ham radio from a man in the Kootenays. Other versions come from Nova Scotia (Tallman pp. 350-51), as well as from Arkansas, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1611.1.12*(a). and Welsch I p. 16).

33. CARIBOO DUST STORM. Mr. Watt used to hear stories like this during round-ups and cattle drives in the Chilcotin and Cariboo country in the 1940s and 1950s. The first part of the tale, concerning gophers, is similar to ones told in Montana, Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1611.1.13.2*.) and even closer to a tale from Nebraska (Welsch I p. 36). The tale falls under Reaver's general heading *X1613. *Lies about unusually thick dust storms*. The second half of the tale is similar to ones in Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1611.1.13.6.*ff.) and again very close to a Nebraska version (Welsch I p. 17).

34. GUMBO MUD. Another tale from Mr. Watt's cattle-driving days. It is a well-known tale, found in Alberta (Halpert p. 42) and Newfoundland (MUNFLA), in England and in the states of Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas (Baughman X1655.1ff. and X1655.2*ff., Reaver *X1655.1.1., Lunt pp. 35-36 and Welsch I p. 50).

35. WET WEATHER IN OKANAGAN. I can find no close parallel to Mr. Simpson's tale, but it might be related to Baughman X1545.1. *Water passage through the earth*.

36. HEAVY FOG. Christopher Brayshaw learned this tale from one of Sid Fleishman's McBroom books, all of which are children's books based on traditional tall tales.

Similar tales come from Alabama, Indiana, Missouri and Texas (Baughman X1651.3.1*ff., Reaver *X1154.1.2. and *X1303.2. and Mullen p. 139).

37. NORTH COUNTRY FOG. Mr. Newell read his version from his column. This tale, as well as the next, falls under the general Baughman motif-number X1651.3*. *Thick fog and animals.*

38. A NEW BRUNSWICK FOG. The motif of shingling the fog is widespread, occurring in Newfoundland (MUNFLA), and in Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia (Baughman X1651.1., Du Mond pp. 29-30, Jansen p. 227, Lunt pp. 28-29, Poston p. 44 and Sutherland pp. 292-95).

39. VANCOUVER FOG. Walking on fog is a common general motif (Baughman X1651(a)ff.), but Mr. Haggstrom's tale seems to have no exact parallels in the literature.

40. BELLA BELLA FOG. The spelling of Sadonovich is uncertain; he was a fisherman in Bella Bella. There are versions of the tale in Nova Scotia (Tallman p. 307) and Prince Edward Island (Sherwood p. 22), as well as in California, Indiana and Pennsylvania (Baughman X1651.2.1*ff.).

41. CLAYOQUOT FOG. Mr. Logie learned this tale from his two Scottish uncles. The motif of fish swimming in fog is discussed above in tale No. 36. A similar tale of leaning on the fog is found in Nova Scotia (Tallman pp. 326-27).

42. MORE CLAYOQUOT FOG. More fog stories from Mr. Logie's uncles. Walking on fog is discussed in tale No. 39 above. In a Nova Scotia version, a ship gets stuck in the fog (Tallman pp. 344-45).

43. THE ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY. This is one version of an international tale about the great fish. It is found in Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Sweden and the West Indies (Aarne-Thompson 1960B), and in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia (Reaver X1301.)

44. THE ONE THAT DID. In other published versions of this tale, it is a photograph of the fish, rather than its shadow, which indicates its weight: Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia (Baughman X1301.4*(e)., Reaver *X1157., Mullen p. 131 and Welsch I p. 97). This tale, as well as tales No. 54 and 133, falls under the general category of Baughman X1762*. *Absurd disregard of the nature of shadows.*

45. ONE DID AND ONE DIDN'T. Submitted by L. D. Thompson of Kelowna in a letter to the Provincial Archives on June 16, 1982. Mr. Thompson sent this same story to a television program called "Tides and Trails" a number of years ago and won a salmon as a prize. The motif of a fish pulling a boat is found in Newfoundland (MUNFLA *X1133.9.), and in Georgia, Tennessee and Texas (Reaver X1303.1. and Mullen pp. 136-37).

46. THE QUICK CAT. Tales similar to this are found in Newfoundland (MUNFLA), and in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia (Baughman X1211(ca)., Reaver *X1211.4. and *X1211.4.2., Davis pp. 83-84, Joines p. 7 and Welsch I p. 110).

47. THE TOUGH WOLVERINE. Dixon Anderson told this story to Emery Scott in Windermere on June 10, 1982 (3986:88-89). Anderson is a packer and guide who tells his stories to his hunting parties. This tale is similar to the previous one.

48. STRETCHING THE TRUTH. Mr. Pankoski heard this tale from Frank Schlitz, a storyteller from Saskatchewan. Schlitz was born in the United States, but moved to Humboldt, Saskatchewan. Mr. Pankoski met him when both were trapping in the Big River area of Saskatchewan. Similar stories come from New York and the western United States (Baughman X1237.1(e). and X1237.2.6*(c).).

49. OLD SKEETER. Of all Mr. Berry's stories, this one is his trademark. His CB (citizen's band) handle is "Muleskinner" and his CB calling card shows a kicking mule. His tale is similar to the Paul Bunyan tale of Babe pulling a crooked road straight, which is found in Ontario (Robins pp. 27–35) and in Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin (Baughman X1237.2.6*(e)ff.).

50. A SMART DOG. This tale is well-known in the United States: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman X1215.8(ab). and Reaver *X1215.8.9.).

51. ONE NOT SO SMART. This tale is one of a number of intelligent dog tales (Baughman and Reaver X1215.8.), but the only exact parallel I could find comes from Virginia (Sutherland pp. 33–35).

52. BOWSER. Ray Logie called in this tale to the Barrie Clark phone-in program on CKNW, Vancouver, July 14, 1982. He did not repeat the story when I interviewed him later in Victoria. It is another tale along the same lines as the previous two.

53. FLY-CASTING ON THE KICKING HORSE RIVER. Here is another tale which Mr. Richardson learned from the East Kootenay storyteller, Bugram. I could find no close parallels, but there is an Alaska story of a caribou which impales a salmon on its horns (Baughman X1234*(bb).) and a North Carolina version in which a cow fishes with its tail (Baughman X1235(ec).).

54. A TRACE LEFT BEHIND. Mr. Haines simply alludes to this tale, rather than giving it the full treatment. I had heard that he knew this story, but when I asked him about it, he only gave this one-line exaggeration. See tales No. 44 and 133 concerning shadows.

55. THE SPLIT DOG I. This tale is quite widespread. It is told in British Columbia (Smyth pp. 194-5), Alberta (Halpert p. 44), Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Ontario (Robins pp. 66–69) and Saskatchewan (CBC I). It is also found in Argentina (Aarne-Thompson 1889L), as well as in England and the following states: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon,

South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman 1889L and X1215.11ff., Reaver X1215.11., Jansen pp. 257-59 and Welsch I p. 105).

56. THE SPLIT DOG II. The fact that both of these split dog tales have a New Brunswick connection is probably pure coincidence, considering how popular and widespread this tale is.

57. A TALL TAIL. Mr. Haines learned this story from a Bob Burns "Arkansas Traveler" radio program of the 1930s or 1940s. This story is part of a complex of tales, which concern the inheriting of acquired characteristics (Baughman X1202.), and either escaping from an animal through tying its tail in a barrel or escaping a dangerous situation by this same means. The first motif is found in Nova Scotia (Fauset II p. 200) and in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina and Texas (Baughman 1911, X1202.1., X1202.1(b) and X1202.1(c)ff., Reaver X1202.ff. and Welsch I p. 78). The second motif is more international: Nova Scotia (Tallman p. 356); Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the USSR (Aarne-Thompson 1875); Colorado, Missouri, New York and North Carolina (Baughman 1875, Reaver *X1133.3.3. and Du Mond pp. 165-69). There is also some connection between this tale and tale No. 86.

58. BUSTER TEGART STEERS FOR SHORE. Submitted by Larry Halverson of Radium Hot Springs in a letter to the Provincial Archives on September 15, 1982. There are no exact parallels to this tale, although it is similar to other stories of fish carrying riders (Baughman X1303.6*.).

59. THE TAME FISH I. When I asked Mr. Seymour who his friend was, he called into the next room and asked Joyce Kind if she was his friend. She came into the room and told her version of the story (No. 60), giving her source in the process. The tale is told in a number of states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New England, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia (Baughman X1306.3*., Reaver *1306.1., Du Mond pp. 155-59 and Welsch I p. 98).

60. THE TAME FISH II. See the previous tale. Joyce Kind heard this tale years ago from Mr. J.S. Todd of White Rock.

61. THE WRONG DOG. This is another one of Frank Schlitz's stories which Mr. Pankoski heard in Big River, Saskatchewan. It is related in general theme to the following two stories.

62. THE WRONG GRIZZLY I. Versions of this tale come from Alberta (Gard p. 204) and from New Mexico (Baughman X1221(da).). There is a similar tale from Wisconsin in which a man fights with a wild bear he thinks is tame (Baughman X1221(ea).).

63. THE WRONG GRIZZLY II. Submitted by Michael Bruce in a letter to the Provincial Archives after my interview with him. He learned this tale from an Alberta storyteller named Ralph Vroom, who was a generation older than Mr. Bruce. See the previous tale for notes.

64. THE SIDE-HILL GOUGER I. This is perhaps the best-known tall tale beast in North America. It roams the hills of British Columbia (St. Pierre pp. 109-11), Ontario (Robins pp. 51-52), and Saskatchewan (CBC II), as well as of Yorkshire, England, and the following states: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia and Wisconsin (Aarne-Thompson 1913, Baughman 1913, X1381ff. and X1382*ff., Thompson X1381., Davis pp. 16-17, Du Mond p. 114-19 and Welsch I p. 88-89).

65. THE SIDE-HILL GOUGER II. See the previous tale.

66. REUDE'S COURSE IN ZOOLOGY. For notes on the side-hill gouger, see tale No. 64. I can find no close parallels to the icegedunk, although there are tales about animals and fish who present themselves cooked, allow parts to be cut from them, or who unwittingly lose pieces of themselves: Newfoundland (MUNFLA *X1124.9.) and Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska and Pennsylvania (Baughman X1208ff., Reaver X1208ff. and Welsch II p. 102). The jackalope is certainly a popular beast but I cannot find reference to it in the literature. However, I have personally seen stuffed jackalopes in prairie pubs (often just the mounted head) and tall tale postcards of jackalopes from Saskatchewan and the U.S. plains. That the beast hops around Nebraska was made evident by Roger Welsch in a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in 1978: "Jumping Jack Flash: The Jackalope Complex." A report of rabbits kicking dogs to death comes from Illinois (Jansen p. 297).

67. THE SKI-HOOFED MUSTANG. This is another tale which Mr. Bruce learned from Ralph Vroom. It was submitted in the same letter as was tale No. 63. I can find no other versions of this tale.

68. THE CORKSCREW OWL AND THE RUNAROUND. This tale was related to me by Reg Beck in an untaped conversation; I have attempted to reconstruct it. He learned this story, and a number of others, from a former high school teacher of his in Cawston. The corkscrew owl has its parallel in a tale from New York (Baughman X1124(b).).

69. THE BEAVERINE. This tale is told by H. V. "Paddy" Acland in an interview by I. Orchard, recorded in 1964, now held by the Provincial Archives (1085:2).

70. OGOPOGO WEIGHED AND MEASURED. Submitted by D. M. Johnston of Surrey in a letter to the Provincial Archives on July 14, 1982. This tale is similar in some respects to stories of huge fish which displace water in rivers and lakes; such tales are found in Nova Scotia (Fauset I p. 72 and Tallman p. 335) and in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina and Tennessee (Baughman X1301.5*(c). and Reaver *1301.1.).

71. THE MOSQUITO GAUGE. This is another story told to me by Reg Beck. He learned this tale when he was a radio operator at Bathhurst Inlet, N.W.T. The story falls under the general category of Baughman X1286.4* *Thick mosquitoes*.

72. LARGE MOSQUITOES I. In Mitchell (p. 202) a grasshopper is mistaken for an airplane. This same motif occurs in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana and North Carolina (Reaver *1286.1.7.1.).

73. LARGE MOSQUITOES II. Mr. Donoghue called in this story to the Barrie Clark phone-in radio program on CKNW, Vancouver, on July 14, 1982. He did not repeat this story during my interview with him. For other versions, see the previous tale.

74. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS I. Ruby Erwin learned this tale from her father over sixty years ago, and hadn't told it until she heard about my hunt for tall tales. Her version of this tale is usually the first part of a slighty longer mosquito story (see next tale). Similar unexpanded versions are found in Nova Scotia (Tallman pp. 330-32) and in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, New Jersey and North Carolina (Baughman X1286.1.3(c). and X1286.1.3(ca)., Reaver *X1286.1.3.1. and Poston pp. 40-41).

75. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS II. This is a fuller version of the above tale. It is told in British Columbia (Smyth p. 199), Alberta (Halpert pp. 45-46), Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Ontario (Robins pp. 55-56) and Saskatchewan (CBC II), as well as in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman 1960M*, X1286.1.3(d)., X1286.1.3(e). and X1286.1.4.1*., Reaver X1286.1.4., Du Mond pp. 144-50, Lunt pp. 25-26 and Welsch I p. 111).

76. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS III. See the previous tale for notes.

77. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS IV. Mr. Newell recited this tale from his column in *The Silver Lining*. For other versions, see tale No. 75.

78. CINCHED MOSQUITO BEAKS V. Mr. Streifel's tale is closest to tale No. 74.

79. VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES. This same tale is told in Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas (Reaver *X1286.2.2), but it is also close to other tales found in Arkansas, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma and Texas (Baughman X1286.2.1*ff.).

80. MORE VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES I. This tale, told of several different insects, is found in New Brunswick (Sherwood p. 11) and Nova Scotia (Tallman p. 334) and in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia (Baughman X1280.2.1ff, Reaver *X1286.2.3. and Welsch I p. 113).

81. MORE VORACIOUS MOSQUITOES II. Mr. Newell reads this story from his column. For notes, see the previous tale.

82. VORACIOUS BUT CONSIDERATE. This tale was told by an anonymous male caller to the CFAX radio station in Victoria during a tall tale phone-in program on July 7, 1982.

Another mosquito story that fits into none of the above themes is told in a letter written by Harold T. Nation to his brother in Kingston, Ontario. I print this with the kind permission of Harold Nation's son, also named Phillip, who is presently editing and annotating the letters of his father. Harold Nation was born in New Zealand in 1876. He moved west from Ontario at the turn of the century and worked for a number of years in the Cranbrook area as a lumberman, surveyor and engineer. From 1906 to 1941, he worked for the Bureau of Mines in Victoria. He died in 1967.

P.O. Box 115,
Cranbrook, B.C.
Dec. 11th. 1902.

Dear Phillip:

Here's looking at yer, 'A Merry Christmas' and t'other thing. I was to have gone to a party at my girl's house tonight, but it's eight miles to town and a slight snow storm and 2½ hours to do it in. Inference? Can't do't.

Stop press news;

As we go to press, the back of the envelope down, news comes of the death of a snow mosquito. The unfortunate insect happened under a large falling snowflake which overwhelmed him, and crushed his life out. When discovered and unwound, the remains were hardly recognizable and might readily have been taken for a piece of tree moss or 'old man's beard'. Funeral takes place in a woodpecker's gizzard tomorrow when he comes along.

The above is vouched for by old Ben Pugh who was drunk when he saw the terrible occurrence.

So short, old boy, Harold.

83. TROUBLE WITH LOCUSTS. Another reading from Mr. Newell's column. This tale, usually told about mosquitoes, is found in Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Nova Scotia (L. Thomas p. 137) and in the following states: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts and Virginia (Baughman X1286.5*(c)ff.).

84. HUNTING RABBITS ON SALTSPRING ISLAND. Mr. Seymour's uncle was "Tiny" Seymour, who was well-known for his strength and wit. This tale is found in Arkansas and Louisiana (Baughman X1124(j). and Reaver *X1115.2.), while a similar story of painting rocks black comes from New York (Baughman X1124(i).).

85. MURPHY THE BEAR-HUNTER. Mr. Loveder recalls this story from his childhood in Ruby Creek, where bears "were just like dogs and cats." Other versions are told in Canada (Shelley p. 132), more specifically in Newfoundland (MUNFLA *X1124(m).) and Nova Scotia (Fauset I pp. 66-67), as well as in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, New York, Texas and Wisconsin (Baughman X584.1.).

86. THE HUNTER'S ROUGH DAY. This is another tale which Mr. Ferguson learned from his uncle, Frank Verdier. The two parts of this story — being borne aloft by geese and escaping from a tree trunk (or tight spot) — are often told as separate tales. In British Columbia the first half of the tale appears in a Carrier Indian legend (Orchard pp. 1-2); the same motif occurs in Alberta (Gard pp. 300-01). This motif also occurs internationally: Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, the USSR and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1881 and Thompson X1258.1). In the United States this part of the tale is found in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, New England, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas (Baughman 1881, Reaver X1258.1. and Welsch I p. 51). The second half of the tale is also an international story. It was told in sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas pp. 138-39)

and in modern times in Estonia, the USSR and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1900). It has also been found in the following states: Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin (Baughman 1900 and X1133.1(b). and Reaver X1133.1.). This second half of the tale also has connections with tale No. 57 above. The tale in its entirety occurs in Nova Scotia (Tallman p. 356-58) and Illinois and North Carolina (Baughman X1133.1(a). and Jansen pp. 255-56).

87. THE SHOOTING GALLERY. This tale falls under the general category of Baughman X1119.2. *Lie: remarkable bag of deer,* but the very same story is told in Michigan and Wisconsin (Baughman X1122.6*(b).) and a similar tale of shooting four moose without moving comes from Massachusetts (Baughman X1119.2(a).).

88. ONE SHOT I. Mr. Newell heard this tale, which he reads from his column, when he was on patrol with the RCMP in northern Alberta in the 1950's. It is another complex tale in which some parts may stand on their own as separate tales. Thus, splitting a bullet on a sharp object occurs in Nova Scotia (Tallman pp. 361-62) and in Maine (Baughman X1122.4.1*.) Catching fish in one's boots or clothes is a widespread motif: sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas p. 109), Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Quebec (Aarne-Thompson 1895), Belgium, Finland, Germany and the USSR (Aarne-Thompson 1895), and Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia (Baughman 1895 and Reaver X1112.&.1.). The story as a whole is also very widespread: Alberta (Gard p. 229), Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Nova Scotia (Creighton pp. 136-37, Fauset I pp. 75-76, Sherwood pp. 13 and 21 and Tallman pp. 336 and 361-62) and Saskatchewan (CBC I); Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Sweden, the USSR and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1890 and 1890F) and Norway (Hennigsen II pp. 62-63); Worcester and Suffolk in England and Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennyslvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia (Baughman 1890 and 1890F, Reaver X1110, and X1122.2., Du Mond p. 109–13, Jansen pp. 252-53, Lunt pp. 30-31, Mullen pp. 141-43, Perdue p. 8-9 and Welsch I p. 83). There is also, perhaps, a connection between this tale and the limb motif in tale No. 131.

89. ONE SHOT II. Mr Berry won a trophy for telling this tale at the MiniSkirts Jamboree CBer's (citizen band operator's) Convention Liar's Contest in St. Albert, Alberta, in 1972. For notes, see the previous tale.

90. BEADS OF SWEAT I. This story won Mr. Logie first prize in a liar's contest. He heard it from his childhood friend, Frankie Karpet. Other versions of this tale are found in Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and in Alabama, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia (Baughman X1122.4.2*ff., Reaver *X1124.5. and Du Mond pp. 44–48). Cougar McLay composed his version of this tale in the 1940s. The following story was written by him around 1951:

This story took place a few years ago when Alaska was still cold. I will never forget the day as long as I live.

It was in the middle of February, when I lifted my gun from above the fireplace and decided to go hunting for some fresh meat as I was running a little short.

I grabbed my powder horn off of a peg behind the door and started out. It sure was cold and I had to set a pretty fast pace in order to keep warm. I imagine I had gone about ten miles and never even raised a rabbit. It was getting on in the afternoon when I decided to head for home. I got about half-way back when I decided to have a little target practice. I was using an old muzzleloader with powder and balls. I set up an empty package of cigarettes and commenced to shoot. Pretty soon I had shot away all my lead so I started back. I hadn't gone a mile when I bumped smack into a polar bear. Well sir, things sure looked grim. I was only about twenty yards from the bear and I could tell by the way his ribs were sticking out that he hadn't had a meal for quite some time. He got down on all fours and started coming slowly towards me growling and licking his chops. Well be damned if I didn't start to sweat. It sure was cold out and the sweat no sooner came out of me than it froze into little hard balls on my forehead. The bear was getting closer and I was getting more desperate so I put the balls of sweat down the barrel of my gun. I took slow and deliberate aim at the bear. I pulled the trigger and be darned if the powder going off didn't melt the sweat balls and nothing but water came out of the gun. The water no sooner hit the air but it froze again into a long pointed icicle. I hit that bear right between the eyes and be darned if it didn't kill him. Yes sir and the funniest part about it, that the bear died from water on the brain.

91. THE LONG SHOT. This tale falls under the general category of Baughman X1122.5*. *Lie: bullet aids hunter, chases target*. Other versions are found in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Maine and Texas (Baughman X1122.5*(a)., Reaver *X1796.3.1 and Lunt p. 32).

92. THE HIGH SHOT. This tale is told in various forms in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Oregon and Wisconsin (Baughman X1121.1ff., Reaver X1122.1. and Beckham p. 89).

93. THE CURVED SHOT. Mr. Ferguson learned this tale from his uncle, Frank Verdier. The tale is widespread in North America: Alberta (Gard pp. 299-300), Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Nova Scotia (Creighton p. 136) and Quebec (Taft p. 62); Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman 1890E and X1122.3ff., Reaver X1122.3., Du Mond pp. 118-19, Lunt p. 32, Perdue pp. 8-9 and Welsch I p. 83).

94. HUNTING CROCODILE. Drew Brayshaw learned this tale from a Reader's Digest *Junior Omnibus* book. Similar tales come from Canada (Shelley p. 131) and from Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas (Reaver *X1119.4).

95. THE TRAIL GROWS COLD. Dr. Mealing learned this story around 1975 or 1976 from one of his students, who was born in the West Kootenays, but who lived at that time in Prince George. Although there are no exact parallels to this tale in the literature, there is a tale from New York of a deer being caught by his frozen breath (Baughman X1623(ad).) and another tale from Nebraska in which people use their frozen breath for shelter from the cold (Welsch II p. 68).

96. PLAYING LEAP-BEAR. There is a similar tale from New York involving a panther (Baughman X12113(b).).

97. WHALE'S MILK I. Mr. Law told this tale to Imbert Orchard, who recorded it at Heriot Bay on Quadra Island, August 5, 1965 (PABC 831.1) George "By-God" Stafford was a logger, storyteller and general character, who lived on Read Island from 1900 to 1925. The closest story in the literature to the whale's milk motif is one from Illinois in which buffalo milk flows from a large herd into a river at such a rate that it is churned into butter downstream (Jansen pp. 223-25). The second part of the tale falls under the general heading of Baughman X1221.1.(b), *Intelligent bear;* there are two stories from Arkansas in which bears keep pigs in pens (Baughman X1223(ag). and Reaver *X1221.1.). but none as far as I know of bears stealing pigs.

98. WHALES MILK II. I recorded this version of Mr. Law's tale in 1982. I also recorded the following version. Dr. Roberts probably heard Bill Law tell this story to Imbert Orchard, who recorded him in Heriot Bay, Quadra Island, on August 5, 1965, since this recording has been aired a number of times. The 1965 version has also appeared in print on several occasions, most recently in *The Elder Statesman*, September 1982, p. 10.

JOHN ROBERTS: I did hear a bear story and you might collect it from somewhere else. It's not applicable to the Cariboo. But I heard it on the radio about a year ago. It was on the west coast, and evidently a mother whale got beached over a sand bar and finished up in a little bay. She didn't have any babies drinking on the milk, and all the milk just kept on flowing out of her nipples and she half-filled this bay with whale milk. And there was a guy living in a little log cabin and he thought, "Well, this is a wicked waste of good nutrition," so he got some pigs. He started to raise these little pigs on the whale milk. But the pigs started to disappear, one every night. Never two or three or anything like that. So he hung a lighted kerosene lamp in the pig house. And he thought, "Well, that might frighten some intruders away." But — and he thought, "Well, by golly, I'll wake up — stay up with my rifle and just see who the hell it is." He suspected some of the neighbours coming down from some of the other valleys, stealing his pigs. About midnight, he hears a bit of a commotion in the pig house, and he saw this form disappearing up the side of the hill with a lantern in one hand and a pig under the arm. And he got his rifle and rammed a bullet home in the chamber and knocked the bolt down. It was a bear that had stolen the pig and was using the lamp, and the bear heard this bolt click down on the rifle, and he turned around and he saw the guy coming after him. He just reached over and he blew the lamp out.

99. WHALES MATING. This tale was also collected by Imbert Orchard in his 1965 interview with Bill Law. I can find no parallels to it.

100. BY-GOD STAFFORD TELLS A LIE. Submitted in a letter by Mrs. Elizabeth L. Kelly of Vancouver to the Provincial Archives on September 29, 1982.

101. A STRANGE ALLIANCE I. Another version of this tale comes from Alberta (Gard pp. 304-05), as well as from Michigan and New York (Baughman X1216.1(ab). and Du Mond pp. 6-12). Mary Pankoski also tells a version:

Then there's the wolf that chased the trapper up a tree. And he was up there for two or three days and wouldn't come down. And the wolf was circling around. And finally the wolf disappeared. The guy was scared to come down. He wasn't gone too long. The wolf came back with a beaver and the beaver chewed the tree down.

102. A STRANGE ALLIANCE II. Mr. Newell reads this tale from The Silver Lining. For notes, see tale No. 101.

103. GRACE. Mr. Donoghue learned this tale from the fishermen around Bella Bella. I can find no parallels to it.

104. ONE WAY TO ESCAPE A COUGAR. Mr. Haggstrom learned this tale from Jimmy Lyons.

105. ANOTHER WAY. This is another tale told by Mr. Ferguson's uncle, Frank Verdier. It is an internationally-known tale, having been popular in sixteenth-century France (G. Thomas pp. 101-102), in Quebec (AarneThompson 1889B), in Finland, Norway, Spain and Yugoslavia (Aarne-Thompson 1889B and Hennigsen I pp. 212-13) and in the following places: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, the Ozarks, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia (Baughman 1889B and X1124.2., Reaver X1124.2. Du Mond pp. 13–17, Lunt p. 44 and Welsch I p. 77).

106. THE VORACIOUS WOLVES OF BURNS LAKE. Dr. Gibson heard this tale when he was practising in Prince Rupert. He credits it to Burns Lake. Other versions of Dr. Gibson's tale occur in Idaho, Texas and Wisconsin (Baughman X1216.1(bb) and Z13.4.1*(d).).

107. HIDING FROM A GRIZZLY. The closest parallel to this tale is one from Newfoundland (MUNFLA *X1133.8.) in which a man escapes a bear by imitating its actions.

108. THE BEAR HUG I. This same tale is found in Virginia (Perdue p. 31).

109. THE BEAR HUG II. Dr. Mealing learned this story in 1975 from a student, Vincent Worme, a Cree Indian from the Prairies. See the previous tale for notes.

110. CASTING FOR MOOSE I. This is a tale which Mr. Beazley used to tell his Boy Scout troop. A moose head on the lodge wall was a necessary prop for this story. There is a possible connection between this tale and one told in Norway of hunting wolves with a rod and line (Aarne-Thompson 1896*).

111. CASTING FOR MOOSE II. This tale loses much in the transcription, since Mr. Pankoski's dramatic way of telling and acting out the tale cannot be duplicated in print. When Ernie Painter told the tale, I was told he too acted out the role of the moose jumping about and rubbing its rump. For notes, see the previous tale.

112. INSIDER'S VIEW OF A MOOSE. Mr. Henderson learned this tale from the old-timers who used to stop in at his father's cabin in the Turtle Mountain area of Manitoba. Stories of being trapped inside of animals, or of shrinking one's way out of a tight spot are found in Nova Scotia (Tallman pp. 356-57), Saskatchewan (I overheard one of my students tell this story in March 1982 in Saskatoon), and in Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina and Virginia (Baughman X1723.3.1. and X1739.4*(a)., Reaver *X1723.3.2. and *X1728.1. and Welsch I p. 76).

Mary Pankoski tells another version: "Oh yeah, uh-huh. That was the chap who went and shot the moose. And he was too far from civilization to get back that night. And he was cold and he was freezing. No blankets. So he dressed the moose — cut the moose open and took the insides out — and then he crawled inside. And the darn thing froze solid overnight. In the morning he couldn't get out. So he thought of the time he voted Liberal, and he felt so darn small, he crawled out of a little place just like that [hands make a slit]."

113. UGLY ENOUGH. Mr. Haines learned this tale from the Bob Burns radio program. This same tale is told in Illinois (Baughman X137(b).). A similar story in which the scarecrow rather than an ugly person achieves the same result is found in Illinois, Kentucky, Mississipi, Missouri, Tennessee and Virginia (Baughman X1252(ca). and Reaver *X1252.2.).

114. SMELLY ENOUGH. The names and locations in this tale have been changed.

115. TOO SMELLY. Dr. Roberts heard this tale in Australia, but has changed its locale. This tale is related to one in which there are usually three nationalities, each of which enters a skunk or snake hole; the third nationality causes the skunks or snakes to either faint or leave home: Newfoundland (MUNFLA), Idaho, Kentucky and Texas (Baughman X691.5.1*. and Reaver *X959.2. and *X1246.1.).

116. THE GRIZZLY DASH. Mrs. Wood heard this story from Dennis Collinson in Fort St. John around 1941. Although I could find no exact parallels, it is similar to a general group to tales concerning remarkable running ability (Baughman X1796.2*., Reaver *X1796.2ff. and Thompson X1796.1.).

117. THE LITTLE STRONGMAN. This is another Bugram tale. It falls under the general category of Baughman X940. *Lie: person of remarkable strength*.

118. THE STRONG WOMAN. This is another Bob Burns story. This tale is in the same category as the previous tale. There is a similar tale from Newfoundland (MUNFLA *X999.1.1) in which stoves, cars and other items are knitted out of steel wool.

119. A MEMORABLE BREAKFAST. This tale is obviously concerned with the general subject of remarkable memory (Baughman X1014*.), and this particular version is probably better-known than the literature indicates. It is reported from Saskatchewan (CBC I) and from Nebraska (Welsch I pp. 81-81), but I have personally heard the tale a number of times over the years.

120. MOM COULD CHOP WOOD. The motifs in this tale occur in Nova Scotia (Creighton p. 134), as well as in Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Oregon and Texas (Baughman X907. 1(d), X986(f). and X1796.4*(ab). and Reaver *X986.2.).

121. A DRUNKARD'S DEATH. The name of this prodigious drinker has been changed. It is part of the tradition of jokes and tall tales about drunkards (Baughman X800. and X932.), and one which I have personally heard on several occasions, but which I could find only once in the literature — a Canadian version (Shelly pp. 18-19).

122. THE PANCAKE COOK. Although this tale seems quite traditional, I could not discover any parallels in the literature.

123. ANOTHER PANCAKE COOK. This is another Frank Schlitz tale. I could find no other versions of it.

124. SASQUATCH BITES THE BISCUIT. Submitted by Mrs. B.A. (Katie) McKelvie of Mill Bay in a letter to the Provincial Archives on June 16, 1982. Mrs. McKelvie learned this story from her late husband, the historian and novelist B.A. McKelvie, who learned it from Sid Saunders of Port Alberni. This tale falls under the general category of Baughman X1811.2*. *Lie: the hard loaf of bread.*

125. BUNYAN COMES TO B.C. Dr. Mealing learned this tale in 1973 or 1974 from the late Sid Hutchinson, who used to give talks at Selkirk College. Hutchinson was born in Vancouver in 1908, but lived most of his life in Fernie. He was a logger, a local historian, a socialist, and the author of two books. This tale shares some motifs with Swanson's "Paul Bunyan's Archives" (No.7). It is similar in some ways to a story from Wisconsin about the origin of the North Dakota plains (Baughman X1081.1*(c).), while the motif of the tall tale hero being responsible for a range of mountains connects this tale with ones told in Alberta (Gard p. 52 and Halpert p. 38) and in Michigan (Baughman X958(m).).

126. THE CARBIDE MINE. This is another Jimmy Lyons tale.

127. THE DEEP MINE SHAFT. This same story is reported from Pennsylvania (Baughman 1920R).

128. PAUL BUNYAN WAS A PIKER. Written and published by Robert E. Swanson in *Rhymes of a Western Logger* (Vancouver: Lumberman Printing, n.d.), pp. 34-35, and reprinted with Mr. Swanson's permission. This tale is related to others about great steam engines (Baughman X1025(e).) and more specifically to a story from Illinois (Baughman X1025(eb).) about a man caught in the water gauge.

129. THE SNAGGED ANCHOR. Len was another storyteller from the Big River area of Saskatchewan. Perhaps he was the only one to beat Frank Schlitz at lying.

130. ENGINE TROUBLE IN THE MOUNTAINS. Mr. Newell reads this tale from his column. The first part of the tale is quite rare with only one other version in the literature of an airplane backing up (Nebraska: Welsch I p. 130). The second part of the tale is very widespread, often occurring as a motif in remarkable hunt tales (see tales No. 88 and 89). The split-limb motif was known to sixteenth-century French liars (G. Thomas p. 109); in modern times, it is found in Alberta (Gard pp. 199-200), Newfoundland (MUFLA), Nova Scotia (Fauset I p. 76) and Quebec (Aarne-Thompson 1890A), as well as in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin (Baughman 1890A, Reaver X1124.3.1., Davis p. 55-56, Mullen pp. 141-43 and Welsch I p.83).

131. THE SUBMARINE DESTROYERS. Christopher Brayshaw learned this tale from a Reader's Digest *Junior Omnibus* book. The same tale is told in Saskatchewan (CBC I), and a similar tale of holding up a photograph of a ship in front of the periscope is told in the United States Navy (Baughman X1012(f).).

132. **THE JONAH WATCH.** This tale comes in several varieties. It is related to other tales of remarkable watches (Baughman X1022(a).) and to stories of fish caught which have amazing contents in their stomachs (Baughman 1154ff. and X1154.1ff. and Reaver X1154.1.). The exact tale of an animal (usually a fish or cow) swallowing a watch which continues to run is also widespread: Newfoundland (MUFLA) and Alabama, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oregon and Virginia (Baughman X1755.1(b)ff., Reaver X1755.1., Beckham pp. 129-31, Davis p. 78–80, Welsch I p. 99 and Welsch II p. 90).

133. **GRANDFATHERS'S CLOCK.** Mr. Newell has not yet published this tale in his column. Other versions are found in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas (Baughman X1762*(c). and Reaver *X1764.). See also tales No. 44 and 54 for other absurdities concerning shadows.

134. **A FINAL STRETCH OF THE TRUTH.** This same tale has been collected in Alberta (Gard p. 326), Newfoundland (MUNFLA) and Nova Scotia (Creighton p. 137), as well as in Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming (Baughman 1917 and X1785.1. and Reaver X1785.1ff.).

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